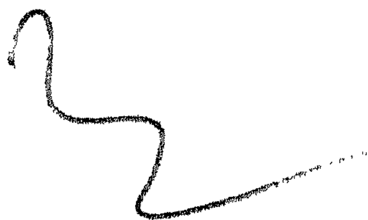




FUNDAMENTALS

OF

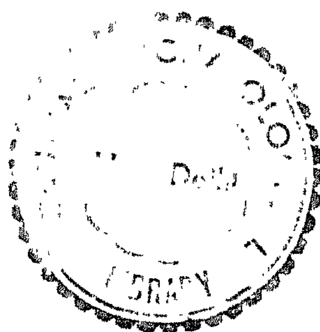
HINDU FAITH AND CULTURE

FUNDAMENTALS
OF
HINDU FAITH AND CULTURE

(A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES)

BY

DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR





PUBLISHERS:
GANESH & CO. (MADRAS) PRIVATE LTD.
1959

Printed in India
At the Vasanta Press, The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras 20
Published by S. Subbaiya for Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Private Ltd., Madras-17

AGENTS:

ENGLAND: Luzac & Co. Ltd., 46 Great Russell Street, London W.C. 1.
HOLLAND: Oriental Booktraders, 10 Den Texstraat, Amsterdam.
U.S.A.: Vedanta Press & Bookshop, 1946 Vedanta Place, Hollywood-28, California.
BOMBAY: Chetana Ltd., 34 Rampart Row.
CALCUTTA: Oxford Book & Stationery Co., 17 Park Street.
NEW DELHI: Oxford Book & Stationery Co., Connaught Place.
MADRAS: Higginbothams Private Ltd. and Railway Bookstalls,



DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

81st Birthday *1st November 1959*

SALUTATION

Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar is eighty years "young" this day and as one of the oldest publishers in South India, first of National literature and later of books on philosophy and religion, we offer our salutation and humble tribute to him on this happy occasion. He is a prince among reviewers and his valuable opinion and encouragement have always been freely and readily made available to us whenever approached.

It is given to other scholars and statesmen to evaluate his attainments and services adequately and in due proportion as patriot, statesman, administrator, connoisseur of arts and belles-lettres *and as a* litterateur. *But as publishers the best that we can do is to bring together a small number of his essays and talks on Hindu Faith and Culture and his call to young India, spread over the last forty years. By its very nature and owing to the short time and space at our disposal, the collection is neither comprehensive nor fully representative but it is proposed to follow this up within the next few months by a substantial volume of his views and reviews, experiences and reminiscences, and his advice to the younger generation. The present collection may be likened to an oblation to the ocean with the water taken out of itself.*

Thanks are due to the Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar's 81st Birthday Celebration Committee for including this humble tribute of ours together with those of others to be offered on the 22nd of November 1959 at the Commemoration meeting.

Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Pvt. Ltd. S. SUBBAIYA
Thyagarayanagar
1st Nov. 1959

CONTENTS

I

FUNDAMENTALS OF HINDU FAITH

THE HINDU faith or religion is composite. It comprises many forms of belief on several philosophies and is essentially a synthesis of creeds. It relies on many scriptures and regards some as revealed but it is not the religion of a book or books. It exists and can function apart from and irrespectively of them. It is correlated with many stories, histories, parables, miraculous occurrences and descriptions of various worlds and states of existence and stages of being. But none of these is pivotal in the sense that if they are disproved or controverted the faith falls to the ground. The laws of irrevocable cause and effect and of evolution, the law of the unity of all life and all energy, otherwise termed the doctrines of Karma and transmigration, are the common and underlying features of all varieties of Hinduism. Save the Supreme Self in the ultimate aspect, all other entities from the stone to the star and from the worm to the highest of evolved beings follow, and are bound by, these laws; and the ultimate Reality, which Itself is regarded by some as personal and by others as impersonal, is reached or attained by the shedding of illusions and along the several paths of action, knowledge and devotion, trodden through many lives and forms of life.

The true Hindu eschews no faith and no path. He does not condemn any form of spiritual search or attainment. The true Hindu is also a true Christian and a true Muslim; and, in any case, sees no hostility between his creed and the

fundamental tenets of those religions. There is no distinction, as far as the Hindu outlook is concerned, between the validity, the authenticity and the inspirational character of his faith and other great faiths of the world. As in the physical sphere, so in the mental and psychological spheres, the Hindu habit and intellect and the Hindu spirit have been and will for ever be hospitable. Therefore, it is not in a spirit of paradox or of epigram that I reassert that to the true Hindu, Christianity and Islam are alike worthy of respect and reverence.

We are prone to accept certificates from the West and often regard them as conditions precedent to recognising our own men and their merits. Tagore's poems in Bengali were not much regarded until he got the Nobel prize, and then he was hailed as the Poet Laureate of India. C. V. Raman was unknown until he was honoured by European Universities and then we found excellence in him. Even at the risk of being accused of indulging in such a habit and in order that I may fortify myself, I desire to quote the testimony of one of the few Westerners who has a right to pronounce an opinion on Hinduism. Sir Monier-Williams, for many decades Boden Professor of Sanskrit in Oxford, describes Hinduism as follows, after visiting India three times and having travelled the length and breadth of the peninsula from Kashmir to Cape Comorin and from Bombay to Tibet:

> A characteristic of Hinduism is its receptivity and all-comprehensiveness. It claims to be the one religion of humanity, of human nature, of the entire world. It cares not to oppose the progress of any other system. For it has no difficulty in including all other religions within its all-embracing arms and ever-widening fold.
>
> And, in real truth, Hinduism has something to offer which is suited to all minds. Its very strength lies in its infinite adaptability to the infinite diversity of human character and human tendencies. It has its highly spiritual and abstract side suited to the metaphysical philosopher, its practical and concrete side suited to the man of poetic feeling and imagination, its quiescent and contemplative side suited to the man of peace and lover of seclusion.

This has been the Hindu outlook and conviction all through the ages. What is the attitude of Hinduism towards the principal evolution of humanity, towards other religions and towards its own doctrines? Let me quote to you from the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयाऽर्चितुमिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥

It means: "Whoever follows any faith and worships Me under whatever denomination and in whatever form with steadfastness of purpose and of faith, his steadfastness and his faith shall I recognise and reinforce."

Hinduism is not one single doctrine but a compound of many creeds. Its underlying characteristic may best be expressed in these suggestive lines:

Sow a thought and you reap an act;
Sow an act and you reap a habit;
Sow a habit and you reap a character;
Sow a character and you reap a destiny.

That doctrine of infinitude of experience and the comprehensiveness and binding character of Karma constitutes the cement, the cohesive element in integrated Hindu thought. Let us analyse the matter with some care. What is the main doctrine or the teaching of the Vedas? Interspersed along the Vedas are the sayings which have been reproduced and expanded later on in the Upanishads and which constitute the foundations of the several Vedānta schools of thought and philosophy. But, by and large, the Vedas may be described as devoted to things ceremonial and sacrificial, and hortatory just as the Exodus and Deuteronomy and Leviticus in the Christian Bible are ceremonial and sacrificial, as well as parts of the Quran.

Lord Buddha who was born seven centuries before Christ accepted the hierarchy of Hinduism, he accepted even the pantheon of Hinduism but went beyond it. He denied the

efficacy of Vedic ceremonies and sacrifices. He stood for a rigid logical system of self-perfection and designed ultimately to dissolve the self in the great Self which is pictured as essentially impersonal. He was termed in his days a nāstika, an atheist. So were the Thīrthankaras and the great Mahāvīra, the protagonists of Jainism, termed atheists. And yet, today, the Buddha is regarded and venerated as an Avatāra, and Buddhism has profoundly influenced all later Hindu religious development. So that when we turn to Buddhism and Jainism, we find that what were termed atheistic philosophies have come within the ambit of the Hindu faith. We find in the Sikh doctrine, the Lingāyat doctrine and the Bhakti cults including the developments associated with Kabir, Tukaram and the great Śaivite and Vaishnava saints efflorescences, by-products and off-shoots of the Hindu faith. And the Hindu religion has embraced them all, given them all hospitality so that a person born in a Śaiva family like myself has a Vaishnava name. And so it goes on. Why should therefore persecution be associated with Hinduism and how can it be regarded as a concomitant of the professing of the Hindu faith? The Sūfi doctrine, although proceeding from Islam, is closely linked with the Hindu line of thought and is equally all-embracing and intrinsically catholic.

Christ's gospel was one of justice and mercy along socialistic lines. He anticipated many of the doctrines which are today preached under other names. Let me, by way of illustration, recount to you two episodes from his life. When a youth, heir to great wealth, went to him and said in substance, "My Lord, I am hungering for the life eternal. What shall I do?", the first answer of Jesus Christ was, "Follow the Commandments: Honour thy father and mother; do not steal; do not commit murder. You know the Commandments." The young man said, "I have followed these Commandments. I have not wilfully or deliberately sinned. And yet the thirst

and hunger in me is unquenched." Then Jesus said in substance, "You are a man of many possessions. Sell all the goods that you have and give the proceeds to the poor and then come to me." The young man was so wealthy and so attached to the worldly power and his wealth that he could not and would not obey that direction. What Jesus Christ said on that occasion is very familiar: "It is easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven." That preaching was essentially communistic as well as other-worldly. On another occasion, Jesus Christ, when he entered the Temple, went to the place where there were money-changers and sellers of doves and other sacrificial offerings. He remonstrated and drove out the money-changers. Many interpretations have been given of such stories. Two opinions have been expressed on the question of miracles. Anyway, this story also proves his attitude towards property and holders of property. How could he be otherwise? He was a product of the later Roman Empire and he and the Jewish territory were under the yoke of Imperial Rome. Therefore the iron entered the soul of the Hebrews who had been living on promises of the advent of a Messiah whom most of them expected to be an earthly king. To them Christ preached a religion of sacrifice and of love and bade them turn aside from their fanatical and narrow faith. Jesus Christ has always been recognised by most Hindus as among the great Messiahs of the world.

As regards the miracles of Jesus, I have already said that there are two opinions on the subject. The same controversy exists as to our Purānas and our Epics; and the validity of the Hindu faith would subsist if the stories were proved to be parables or even myths in the light of later knowledge or research. In each such revelation or manifestation as the great Śankarāchārya once said, you can believe only as a

result of personal investigation and research which he termed Vichāra and consequent conviction. The revelation must come to each man and must not be accepted at second hand.

To say that some of the present fundamentals of Hindu faith were in existence before the rise of Hindu religion in its present form, is not to disparage Hinduism. Take the Śakti worship. Today, it is beginning to be recognised that the Śakti cult is anterior to the Āryan invasion. When the Āryans came and began to settle here, Śakti worship was part of their religious belief and practice. Where great ideas float in the air, they are seized upon and utilised for the reformation, transformation and sublimation of the human soul. There is no rejection and there need be no spurning of any excepting what is false.

Furthermore, writing on the Bible, Herbert George Wood, Director of Studies, Woodbrooke, Birmingham, Lecturer on the New Testament, Fellow of the Jesus College, Cambridge, has stated as follows in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Vol. 3, p. 501):

> Side by side with the advance of natural science came the development of literary and historical scholarship and the demand that the Bible should be read and studied like any other book. This meant not that the Bible was the same in character as any other book but that the same canons of criticism must be applied to the national literature of the Hebrews and the writings of the first Christians as were applied to the literature and history of other peoples or to the classical documents of other faiths. The study of Hebrew and Greek texts dissolved at least the cement by which the doctrine of inspiration had held together the whole Bible as a homogeneous Divine product. The discrepancies and disharmonies in the Scriptures could no longer be disguised. Moreover, many traditional beliefs concerning the date and authorship of particular books were found to have no support in the text of the Bible itself. Thomas Hobbes had observed that the Pentateuch seems to be written about Moses rather than by Moses. Literary criticism showed that the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was a Rabbinic tradition, which was unsupported by the Pentateuch.
>
> Again, the net effect of the progress of natural science and literary criticism was to undermine the claim made for the scriptures on the grounds of their alleged antiquity and absolute harmony. The traditional arguments from prophecy ceased to carry weight and the appeals to miracles were discounted.

A great deal has been said with reference to another aspect of the matter. It has been stated that Christianity (Catholicism especially) is a militant faith, a converting faith. So is Islam. And therefore it is argued that anything which prevents the grant of full facility for conversion to Christianity or Islam, should be regarded as improper or sinful and as offending against the law of man and God. I grant that every human being has the right to exercise suasive powers, his powers of advocacy, to appeal to the highest and best instincts of his fellowmen, to induce him to think and act on the same lines as himself. If a person honestly feels that light came only to Jesus and to his apostles and to those that have followed him, it is perfectly open to him to preach the faith that is in him and to induce honest conversion. But if conversion is undertaken as a wholesale mass movement or is based upon the hope or possibility of temporal advantages or is done merely to procure or manufacture statistics favourable to a particular community, such a conversion has been opposed by every great Christian writer and thinker. Conversion therefore is perfectly legitimate, provided it proceeds from fundamental convictions or, in the language of the Christian Fathers, a "change of heart". If it does not, what do our Scriptures say about such a conversion? Here again, I am quoting from the *Gītā*:

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

What does this involve? Each race, each individual, has a heredity, has an environment, has a background, has inherited certain aptitudes and instincts; and religion is a product not only of mental outlook and effort but of heredity, age-long, ancestral, racial and other tendencies and subconscious forces operating obscurely and mysteriously in the case of each individual consciousness. To jettison a faith that has been ours and to take up another faith is a serious

responsibility—not a responsibility that we should shirk if a real call comes but certainly not one lightly to be embarked upon. I myself believe that if there had been conversions effected from Hinduism to any other faith, it is the right and duty of those who feel strongly on the eternal validity of the Hindu faith and way of life to strive to reconvert those who had left the fold, provided that the same tests and conditions are applied to reconversions as to the original conversions.

—Courtesy *Prabuddha Bhārata*, 1957

II

PHILOSOPHY OF ŚANKARĀCHĀRYA

Śrī Śankarāchārya was almost unique in the history of thought; he combined in himself the attributes of a poet, a logician, a devotee and a mystic as well as being the architect of the monistic system of philosophy that bears his name. He was an inspired poet whose appeal was, in turn, to every human feeling and sentiment. His descriptions of Nature and his appraisal of human and divine personality reached the summit of art, and his command over the *navarasas* (nine kinds of poetic flavour or sentiments) was superb.

At the same time, in his commentaries on the *prasthāna-traya* (the three bases of Vedānta, *viz.* the *Upanishads*, *Brahma-sūtras* and the *Gītā*), he displayed a rare faculty of relentlessly logical and concatenated argument and refutation, and such subtlety of reasoning as has been rarely surpassed in the philosophical writings of the world. He vindicated and firmly established the Advaita philosophy which has been described as one of the supreme achievements of Hinduism.

Śankara was simultaneously the author of some of the sweetest lyrics, like *Saundarya-lahari*, which are devoted to the description of the personal Godhead in several manifestations. Within the short compass of thirty and odd years, he travelled throughout India and demonstrated his marvellous organising capacity by the establishment of *maṭhas* (monasteries) in all the four quarters of India, devoted to the continuation of the doctrines he had expounded by *sannyāsins* (monks) who

demonstrated in their dedicated lives the efficacy and the practicableness of such things.

If one can presume to summarise the main features of his philosophy, contained as they are in the commentaries on the *Gītā*, the *Upanishads* and the *Brahma-sūtras*, and in such condensed expositions as *Vivekachūdāmani*, *Ātmabodha*, *Śataśloki*, *Lakshananirūpanam*, and the unequalled compendium of wisdom, the *Dakshināmūrti Stotra*—they consist in the affirmation of *samsāra*, or the succession of births and deaths, and its cosmic significance, and in the realisation of the essential unreality of phenomena in the context of the reality of the Supreme Self, the realisation of that Self not being a theoretical matter but in the nature of a direct realisation and an actual experience summarised in the saying *Tattvamasi* (THAT thou art)—in his own language: *Yasyaiva sphuranam sadātmakam-asatkalpārthakam bhāsate.*[1]

Even amongst Indians there is considerable misapprehension in regard to the real import of Śankara's Advaita. He asserts that the eternal, impersonal Brahman is the only ultimate Reality. He explains the phenomena of the universe as due to the power called *māyā*, by which that Absolute, without undergoing any change in or by itself, appears to us as an ever-changing succession of phenomena conditioned by time and space. He postulates that the spirit of man is identical with the Supreme Spirit and that our sufferings are due to the failure to realise this identity, and further declares that this realisation can procure for us liberation. One of his chief doctrines is that *karma* and *upāsana* (devotion) are ancillary to *jñāna* or illumination.

Śankara did not teach that the world was unreal or a figment. On the other hand he was at pains to point out that such an idea of unreality was a part of the Buddhist doctrine.

[1] ". . . whose manifestations, the essence of which is reality, appears as the object of fictitious notions."

Owing to *avidyā*, according to him, we see diversity where there is unity, and many where there is one. Śankara is further remarkable for his insistence on knowledge by investigation and not by the mere acceptance of the assertions of others.

The main background of Śankara's system is the *Māndūkya Upanishad* on which he has composed his well-known commentary. The second verse of that Upanishad runs as follows: *Sarvam hi etat Brahma, ayam ātma Brahma* . . . .[1]

Śankara's conception of the Absolute is not solely a matter of intellectual subtlety. He assumes that the relation of Brahman to the world is *anirvachanīya* (impossible of explanation). Brahman is attributeless and immutable. Īśvara Himself, in a sense, is a product of māyā, the highest approach to the Nirguna Brahman possible for the individual soul. The world is an apparent transformation through māyā of the Nirguna Brahman, the *jīva* being also, in reality, all-pervading and identical with Brahman. When this *jīva* is individualised by what are called its *upādhīs* (adjuncts), it regards itself as a doer or an agent.

As to māyā referred to in the above argument of Śankara, it is somewhat as follows: "Man's senses may deceive him; his memory may play him false; the forms of the world may be a matter of delusion; the objects of knowledge or perception may be doubted; but the doubter himself cannot be doubted." This position leads to the conclusion that the Self, whose nature is *sat-chit-ānanda*, is universal and infinite, whereas the world of objects is subject to mutation. Nevertheless, the world as perceived is as real as the perceiver. In saying this, Śankara differs fundamentally from the Yogacharas of Buddhism.

The world, according to Śankara, is neither non-existent nor void. Its attributes are neither *abhāva* nor *sūnya*. But

[1] "All this is Brahman, this Ātman (Self) is Brahman. . . ."

granted all this, the world is not the ultimate Reality, and our confusion arises because we do not differentiate between the basic Ātman and the empirical *anātman* (non-Ātman). *Moksha* arises when this truth is realised. It is not Nirvāna in the sense of dissolution but it is the replacement of a false outlook, *avidyā*, by the true outlook, *vidyā*. In the *Viveka-chūdāmani* Śankara says: "Deliverance is not achieved by repeating the word 'Brahman,' but by directly experiencing Brahman."

Having proceeded so far, Śankara thereafter expounds the view that the *nirākāra* Absolute becomes *ākāravat* or embodied for the individual worshipper as a personal (*saguna*) God which is but a form in which the Absolute can be comprehended by the finite mind.

The religion of a personal God is not a mere dogma but is a product of realisation and experience. As the end of religion is *sākshātkāra*, what is termed *bhakti* is a striving for this *sākshātkāra* or realisation by means of a personal God or a symbol, *pratika*, which may be an image, a painting or an object in Nature. It will thus be seen that Śankara does not exclude or expel the framework of the external world. This is an aspect which is not always understood by those who deal with the Vedānta system.

The truth of Brahman may be mentally or intellectually envisaged. But in spite of it there is a deep-rooted desire for personal separateness, which is the true *avidyā*, the true play of māyā. It creates the notion: "I am the actor. I am one who experiences." This notion is the cause of bondage to conditional existence, birth and death, and this notion can be eradicated only by a strenuous endeavour to live in union with Brahman. Such eradication is called *moksha*. One of the boldest steps taken by Śankara is the pronouncement that when a man follows the ways of the world or even the ways of tradition (*i.e.*, when he believes in religious rites and

the letter of the scriptures), he cannot attain the knowledge of Reality until and unless by that path he attains the citadel of *jñāna* (illumination).

It may be observed that similar conceptions and thoughts have occurred to men and women in many other countries and in other ages. St. Catherine of Genoa exclaims, " My 'me' is God, nor do I recognise any other 'me' except God Himself"; and the Sūfi saint, Bayazid, stated, " I went from God to God, until they cried from 'me' in 'me,' 'Oh thou I'." When someone knocked at the saint's door and asked " Is Bayazid here? " his answer was, " Is anybody here except God? "

In that remarkable compilation of Aldous Huxley entitled *The Perennial Philosophy* occurs the following passage:

> That art thou. Behold but one in all things, God within and God without. There is a way to reality in and through the world, and there is a way to reality in and through the soul. But the best way is that which leads to the Divine ground simultaneously in the perceiver and in that which is perceived.

That inspired mediaeval philosopher, Ruysbroeck, has stated:

> The image of God is found essentially and personally in all mankind. In this way we are all one, intimately united in our external image which is the image of God and the source in us of all our life.

Perhaps, however, one of the truest successors of Śankara was Spinoza. According to him, God of Nature, the totality of all existing things, is God. God, according to him, is not a cause outside of things, which passes over into things and works upon things from without. He is immanent, dwelling within, working from within, penetrating and impregnating all things. In his short treatise Spinoza utters the truth as manifested to him:

> Nature consists of infinite attributes. To its essence pertains existence so that outside it there is no other essence or existence. It thus coincides exactly with the essence of God.

What may be called the Śankara system has thus pervaded and influenced not only all aspects of Indian thought but has

had significant repercussions amongst medieval Christian saints, Sūfi divines, and more recent thinkers like Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. There is, furthermore, a growing body of scientific thinkers, who, confronted by the phenomena and development of nuclear, atomic and cosmic theories, feel irresistibly drawn to Śankara's enunciations as the most legitimate and satisfactory explanation of the universe, physical, psychological and para-psychological.

The more one studies the teachings of Śankara and his source books, the *Upanishads*, the *Brahma-sūtras* and the *Gītā*, the more one marvels at the intuitive anticipation by past seers of what are now coming to be regarded as scientific truths. The atomic theory and the reservoir of incalculable energy in the atoms, the doctrine of conservation of energy and many of the developments of physics, chemistry and biology regarding the infinitesimally small and the infinitely great being evolutionary products and translations of primal energy, are envisaged in the doctrine of Aṇu, of Śabda-Brahman, and of Śakti.

In an article by Dr. J. B. Rhine on para-psychology there is the following observation:

> Why should we suppose that there could be no kinds of energy beyond those that are known? Why should it be assumed that all the energies of Nature should be subject to time and space and mass relationship and perceptible to the sensory organs of man?

Again, some of the conclusions reached by astronomers and physicists that have culminated in the works of Einstein and men like Sir James Jeans, seem like passages from Śankara's exposition of the "relativity of knowledge" and the illusoriness of sensation and experience.

Incidentally, it may be observed that the saying "*Yadidam kincha jagat sarvam prāna ejati nihsritam*" [1] taken in conjunction with the *Brahma-sūtra* aphorism "*Kampanāt*," is the assertion

[1] "This whole universe, every bit of it, is all projected by the vibration of Prāna."

that Prāna or life is a continuous vibration or manifestation of energy operating in the Brahman and is circumambient in relation to the Supreme Self.

The details of Śankara's life are well known. But attention may be drawn to the chandāla incident at Vārānasi (Banaras) in *Manīshā-panchakam*:

Brahmaivāham idam jagachcha sakalam chinmātravistāritam
Sarvam chaitadavidyayā trigunayāśesham mayā kalpitam;
Ittham yasya dhridā matih sukhatare nitye pare nirmale,
Chāndālo'stu sa tu dvijo'stu gururityeshā manīshā mama.

"I am indeed Brahman; all this universe is nothing but the manifestation of pure Consciousness; all this is imagined by me (in the Self) due to Ignorance (*avidyā*) constituted of the three *gunas*"—he who has this firm conviction and is ever established in the eternal, pure, blissful Absolute, let him be a low-caste chandāla or a twice-born brahmin, I declare, he verily is my guru.

The first few verses of this poem contain the essence of Vedāntic teaching and an enunciation of the ultimate unity of the universe that must lead to tolerance and infinite comprehension.

The special glory of Śankara is that over and above being the protagonist of the monistic approach, he is author of innumerable *stotras* (hymns) as already stated. The *jñāna* of Śankara is not a cold study of books but a warm-hearted striving to realise the truth, which, when turned towards a a personal Deity, becomes *bhakti*. Śankara is as insistent as Buddha on the supreme importance of ethics as one of the fundamentals of spiritual life. But his outlook on karma, on temple worship and on domestic ceremonial is synthetic and harmonious, and not at all destructive.

—Courtesy *Vedanta for East and West*, 1959

III

PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY

THE PRESENT is one of those occasions when the world seems to be on tip-toe awaiting the zero-hour, a moment when history may alter its course in the direction of a fundamental change in the ordering of the world's affairs, comparable with the moment when, as the Biblical legend has it, the sun and the moon stood still for the sake of Joshua. There is a shiver of expectation as of a swimmer taking breath before making his dive. It is no wonder that things are in this posture because it must be conceded that the results of the victorious march of science of which so much was said and dreamt half a century ago and of the expectations that the values of life and of philosophy would be remodelled on strictly scientific and mathematical bases have belied all hopes. The positive sciences and their innumerable applications to practical purposes have, no doubt, annihilated time and distance and familiarised humanity with new labour-saving contrivances. On the other hand, they have incalculably multiplied the means at the disposal of man to molest and to destroy his fellow-man and his works. In the region of philosophy, speculation has made a full circle and through dogmatic belief and half-acknowledged doubt and atheism and agnosticism has arrived in the writings of Einstein, Jeans and Eddington at what is hardly distinguishable from pure mysticism. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the regeneration of mankind through scientific achievement is no longer an article of belief and the collapse

of material prosperity and of a society based on capitalism financial centralisation and planning for huge correlated industries have become manifest. The war in its progress has wrought material havoc and destroyed old landmarks and centres of busy life and culture; but it has done something even more basic. It has made it impossible for society in the future to be reshaped on the foundations regarded as impregnable in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. It is difficult to conceive of land or raw material, capital or wealth being hereafter concentrated, monopolised and used by individuals or groups or for the benefit of a class. Where such capital and wealth have not been utterly destroyed, they will progressively go into the hands of the State and we are almost back again in many lands to society as was conceived by Hobbes in his Leviathan. In some parts of the world steps have already been taken to nationalise industry, capital, labour, finance and the education of the people. Such nationalisation has occurred both under political systems termed popular and those which are clearly oligarchical or autocratic in regime. In short, life has assumed a new tempo and a new significance which would repay investigation. It is not therefore inappropriate to deal with the problem of the scope and outlook of philosophical speculation as it is being transformed under our eyes not by way of abstract enquiry but as a guide for conduct and as a beacon-light for humanity's progress in the immediate future. This is why I have gladly accepted the kind invitation of the All India Radio to place a few thoughts before the public for their consideration. None of them is new but some of them may perhaps stimulate enquiry.

If one reviews the past, say of England, and goes no further back than the 18th century, the main characteristic as well as the consolation of the "gentleman class" as it was then called, was its sense of leisure and its

relative contentment. Not for nothing did Austin Dobson sing:

> Doubtless you
> With too serene a conscience drew
> Your easy breath and slumbered through
> The gravest issue;
> But we, to whom our age allows
> Scarce space to wipe our weary brows,
> Look down upon your narrow house,
> Old friend, and miss you!

On the contrary, at this moment our efforts and the results that we achieve seem to be best summarised by George Meredith when he laments:

> Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
> When hot for certainties in this our life!
> In tragic hints here see what evermore
> Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force,
> Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse,
> To throw that faint thin line upon the shore!

In other words, much of what we do and strive for appears to be insignificant, vague and purposeless.

Humanity is, in general, conditioned by its wants. If these remain unsatisfied, people turn impatient. If they are satisfied, people seem to remain unaffected thereby. This probably is the reason why so many competing religions and sects and philosophies are claiming to make an appeal to the understanding and conscience of a troubled generation. The truth of the matter is, however, that the spirit of sect and bigotry is everywhere present and our life and our conversation are hollow and ineffectual. Surface meets surface, as Thoreau asserted in his famous essay on "Life Without Principle". Journalism, the wireless, the gramophone and the cinema symbolise the pace at which things now move which, in turn, has led to the habit of surveying only the headlines of life and to what has been aptly described as the macadmisation of mind, its foundation being broken into fragments for the wheels of present-day civilisation to travel over.

What is the remedy? I conceive it to be neither more nor less than a new alertness and wariness and devotion to reconsecrate ourselves to tasks that are appropriate to the dignity and the solidarity of our race. Even the facts of science may dust the mind by their dryness unless they are effaced each morning, in the language of the American philosopher, and rendered fertile by the dews of fresh and living truth. To achieve this does not involve belief in any dogma or particular creed. It only requires some specific ideals and the discipline to work for if not to reach them. After much discussion over his own punishment and the possibility of life after death, Socrates is made by Plato to say that we should participate in certain disciplines and virtues in the present life notwithstanding that one is not assured of the future and its potentialities. In the language of Plato's *Phaedo*: To affirm, indeed, that these things subsist exactly as I have described them, is not the province of a man endued with intellect. But to assert that either these or certain particulars of this kind take place with respect to our souls and their habitations—since our souls appear to be immortal—this is, I think, becoming, and deserves to be hazarded by him who believes in its reality. It is appropriate that a man should be confident about his soul and should earnestly apply himself to disciplines. This attitude towards life has been a consistent characteristic of the wise man through all the ages, even although it is recognised that speculations on things that lie beyond us too often leave the mind, as the wise consort of Pericles is reported to have said, to the lassitude of disappointment. Thinkers have never admitted that the business of philosophy is only to examine and estimate all those things which come within the cognisance of the understanding. In the ultimate analysis and having realised to the full the implications and the dangers of the weariness, the fever and the fret that now oppress our souls and having at the

same time divested ourselves of those mysterious terrors and those flattering and pleasant dreams which once warned or lured humanity away from or towards particular courses of conduct, we find it our urgent duty now to rebuild a new edifice of thought and hope in which we may dwell as a refuge from the outer and inner perils of the world.

What are the foundations on which such a structure can be raised? The foremost is this, namely, that no man or class of men has or can have a monopoly of truth or a patent regimen for salvation. " There are nine and ninety ways," sang Kipling, " of inditing, tribal lays: And every single one of them is right." In other words, the traditions, the heredities, the histories and temperaments of men and races necessarily result in different ways of approach to life's problems and the condition of philosophy and its fruit are alike the recognition of this truth. If the seeker is earnest, the divergences of the paths are immaterial; and India need not be reminded of what the Lord Śrī Krishna asserted when He promised that every one who, following his own chosen path, had the same mental urge and underwent the same discipline would arrive at the same goal, namely, the object of man's eternal quest. The quality of charity and tolerance, the principle of live and let live, is, to my mind, the fundamental accompaniment of true philosophy; and the preciousness of this gospel is emphasised by contemporary history. The lack of it led to the often purposeless cleavages of the Buddhist and the Hindu sects, to the schisms and disputations of Christian churches and groups from the 3rd to the 17th century with their terrible toll of life and knowledge, to the cleavage in the Islamic world and to the multiplication of dispensations which have done more than any secular war to destroy the bodies and brutalise the souls of countless generations of men. Though it is too much to assert with the great writer who said that there was only one Christian and he died on the Cross, there has been very

little practice of Christian principles by the nations who have led the van in the medieval or the modern world. A similar statement can be made of most formal religions but it can be averred that the one system which has adhered most clearly though, alas, not continuously to this ideal is the Hindu civilisation.

यं शैवाः समुपासते शिव इति ब्रह्मेति वेदान्तिनः
बौद्धा बुद्ध इति प्रमाणपटवः कर्तेति नैयायिकाः ।
अर्हन्नित्यथ जैनशासनरताः कर्मेति मीमांसकाः
सोऽयं नो विदधातु वाञ्छितफलं त्रैलोक्यनाथो हरिः ॥

This poem which only re-iterates the ideal of the *Gītā* is not a mere aspiration but has been happily exemplified in India in the treatment of Muslims, Parsis, Jews, Christians and all religious minorities until political currents and cross currents served to muddy the stream of life. In my humble view, the *sine qua non* for a harmonious development of human civilisation is the recapturing of what I may call this characteristic Hindu conception. Not otherwise than by its fullest expansion would there be found any scope for that development of personality and that mutual honour and respect of which a merely political democracy is a shadow and may be a simulacrum. Recent communications to India by some Members of Parliament indeed disclose that the bases of such an arithmetical democracy are now being re-examined.

Granted the existence and practice of this attribute and virtue, we must nevertheless realise that it is the Infinite for which mankind hungers and, as has been admirably expressed by Havelock Ellis, we ride gladly on every little wave that promises to bear us towards it. The expansion or aspiration of the whole soul which, in some cases, bears the form of philosophy and in others that of formalised religion, has been

often a force on the side of cruelty and repression. But it must not be ignored that only in the strength of this expansion or aspiration could men have acted and suffered so much torture as they have done in the service of religion. When I talk of philosophy or religion in this connection, the words are used in no narrow or restrictive sense. The liberation of impulses recognised as religion is often concerned with art and its reaction not only on the creative artist but those who have trained themselves to appreciate its import. Perfect art, whether it be embodied in a poem or picture, a statue or a piece of music brings us to the presence of the Infinite. Whether we confront temples or pyramids, images or frescoes, marmorial prose or haunting melody, the effect of mystery and ecstasy is the same. This manifestation of the Infinite took the form of beautiful representations of man and woman in Greek Art. In Europe, generally it took the shape of Gothic and other cathedrals. In India, architecture and symbolic sculpture, daring speculation, and infinitely refined music took us above and beyond ourselves. It is noteworthy that significant art even when it deals with commonplace subjects, as in the Dutch paintings, can bring us close to the edge of the world. But perhaps it is music that has the most specific religious appeal. In the words of a great writer, there is no other art that tells us such forgotten secrets about ourselves. "Oh, what is this that knows the road I came by," hymns a poet. It was this realisation of the significance of art that made Keats affirm "Beauty is truth—Truth beauty. This is all ye know and all ye need to know" on earth. This kinship of the beauty of things with the innate mystery of things is what has resulted in the song of Solomon and the Gīta-Govinda.

Philosophy at its highest as conceived of by Śankara, Plato or Kant has a similar appeal. No two philosophies can be alike because no two minds are alike. But the attraction

of philosophy is the same as that of a true work of art inasmuch as it is one of the beautiful dwellings which the human soul has erected for itself.

As a next step we come to a state of things in which not the beautiful alone but all things make an appeal to the spirit. The revelation made, for instance, by Walt Whitman of the essential sacredness of the common man and woman and of human personality is a striking though not a wholly new gospel. It is one which the ancient Roman Emperor proclaimed in the words, "I do not regard as strange or foreign to myself anything that is human inasmuch as I am human." It was this vision of humanity and the realisation of the value and glory of each human soul that led to the renunciations of Buddha and of Christ.

A further step is the vision of a universal law, a discovery, in the language of a recent thinker, of the vastness but yet the homeliness of the world. No one perhaps has expressed it in literature more fully than Goethe and Wordsworth, and Thoreau in his Essays wherein he has given an apt expression to the truly religious aspects of the world around us. Having made unique efforts to live close to Nature and be self-sufficient unto himself, Thoreau declares, for instance, of the song of the American wood thrush that whenever a man hears it, he is young and Nature is in her spring. Whenever he hears it, he adds, there is a new world and the gates of heaven are not shut. When Wordsworth and Shelley sing of the rainbow and the skylark, the message is the same. The completest evolution, however, of this philosophic consciousness is evident from the emotion or the intuition of the union with the world where the limits of the individual seem to vanish and there is hardly any acceptance of an external will or conscience or being. Such a feeling has been differently expressed in various countries and by many seers. The Chinese philosopher, Lao-tse, describes it as emptiness meaning by it the

eschewal of all aims that centred in oneself. It is only by doing nothing, he states, that the Kingdom can be made one's own. The Tamil philosopher expresses the same idea in the words:

சும்மா இருப்பது நலம்.

The *Upanishads* and the *Gītā* speak of Yoga, namely, the union of the individual with the Supreme. Four great aphorisms are the landmarks of the Hindu philosophy.

महावाक्यानि चत्वारि
विज्ञानं ब्रह्म अहं ब्रह्मास्मि
तत्वमसि अयमात्मा ब्रह्म

The Absolute is wisdom. I am that Absolute. THAT thou art. The soul is Brahman. In these four ways is also expressed what the Buddha declared. "If I know that my own body is not mine and yet the Universe is mine and it is both mine and thine, no peril can happen." This also is the sense in which the Sūfi describes the mystic union of the human bridegroom with the Divine Bride. The same thought occurred to the Roman Emperor: "Everything is harmonious with me that is harmonious with the Universe."

If these, then, be the aspects from which the ultimate problems of the Universe can be viewed, what is their relation to the world we live in and its ways? How are we to deal with the inevitable shortcomings and fallings away from the ideal which seem to be inseparable from human existence and effort? The difficulty of philosophy is not so much in its enunciation of principle but in the daily application of those principles to human life and to human conscience. No one has approached this dilemma with deeper insight than that great visionary and poet, Robert Browning:

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;

O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straight way to its mind, could value in a trice:
But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account:
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:
Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped:
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

More definite and more practical than Robert Browning's is the message conveyed and the light shed upon the path in three passages from the *Taittirīya* and the *Śvetāsvatara Upanishads* which I freely translate:

१. सत्यान्न प्रमदितव्यं धर्मान्न प्रमदितव्यं
कुशलान्न प्रमदितव्यं भूत्यै न प्रमदितव्यं
स्वाध्यायप्रवचनाभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम् ॥

२. सहनाववतु सहनौ भुनक्तु
सहवीर्यं करवावहै
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ॥

३. स एकोऽवर्णः बहुधा शक्तियोगात्
वर्णाननेकान् निहितार्थोदधाति ।
विचैति चान्ते विश्वमादौ सदेव
स नो बुद्ध्या शुभया संयुनक्तु ॥

1. Swerve not from truth, swerve not from Dharma, swerve not from prudence, self-protection and the path of worldly prosperity. Swerve not also from constant reading and teaching.

2. May we be supported and cherished and may we obtain sustenance in comradeship and be full of courage,

may our studies be fruitful and may there be no mutual hatred.

3. He who is alone and without distinctions, who nevertheless creates diversities for specific purposes and annihilates them ultimately, he in whom the worlds are absorbed, let Him grant us true discernment.

The aim and end of philosophy is thus seen to be the attainment of true discernment—critical and awake, though fully responsive, to the inescapable wonder and the sacred mystery enveloping all things and events, small and great.

These unforgettable exhortations do not ignore the practical aspects of existence, but seek in harmonious combination the maintenance of a life of thought and of culture and that never-ending quest of what is beyond manifested being without which true philosophy would be meaningless.

—A Broadcast Talk, December 1940

IV

THE MEANING OF EXISTENCE

THE SELF-SATISFACTION and certitude that characterised philosophic thought a few years ago have given place to a questioning of the ultimate verities, and people are now less certain than ever before of fundamentals. They are constantly putting to themselves the question whether the present civilisation and the so-called progress that has been attained have been really worthwhile. Men in Asia and in Europe lived in the old days in a world of whose purpose they were convinced. The essentials of the universe seemed to be its regularity and orderliness, although from time to time doubters like Omar Khayyam exclaimed:

> The ball no question makes of ayes or noes
> But here or there as strikes the player does,
> And he that turned thee down into the field,
> He knows about it all—he knows, he knows.

In the medieval ages in Europe, man was content to rely on the Bible and on Aristotle—the latter being the ultimate authority on worldly affairs and science and the former embracing all regions beyond the reach of reason. It is all very different today. Later developments of Science or mathematical reasoning have administered many shocks to the complaisant, and such elementary ideas as time and space which were the basic concepts of thought have received new definitions and are propounding fresh problems to the physicist and the philosopher. We are face to face with amazingly

new doctrines such as that relating to a constantly expanding universe which, nevertheless, seems to co-exist with finite space. Moreover, the higher science and philosophy of today have effectively abolished substance as such, and in essence reverted to the 'māyā' theory of the Indian Seers. The material world which was postulated as something definite and objective is now regarded as consisting ultimately of waves and electric and magnetic charges. As has been remarked by a leading thinker, the idea of substance has been replaced by the idea of behaviour. Energy, and not material particles, seems now to be the primordial thing, and the mystic idea of the Logos and the Hindu picture of 'Śabda Brahma' or 'Nāda Brahma'—that is the spirit of the universe as embodied in vibration or in energy manifested as sound waves—seem to have been a real anticipatory thought. Perpetual disintegration and the transformation of one element to another and cosmic radiation coming from outer space are some of the new thoughts claiming recognition.

The theory of relativity has made inroads into the old laws of motion and gravitation. We are taken into regions which transcend imagination and are told that our measures of length and time are variable with the motion of the observer, or, in other words, there is no such thing as the time or distance between two events, but only relative motion, what is important being neither space nor time but interval. So far have these speculations taken us that it is possible for Sir James Jeans to assert that the Universe can be best envisaged as consisting of pure thought; another scientist, Levy, going so far as to say that the underlying reality of the Universe is never perceived but that a mere appearance is experienced so that what the mind pictures is not reality, but its superficial structure. It is marvellous that the same thought occurred to the Indian Seer, who asserted in the *Kathopanishad*:

Save by the statement that it exists, how is the Universe to be understood?

In the result, therefore, the materialism or positivism of the middle of the 19th century has culminated in an attempt to vindicate the spiritual character of the Universe. We are now in a positive welter of philosophic tendencies. We have today the school of thought which maintains the existence of some thing independent of consciousness. We have those who rely on experience as not being inconsistent with the acceptance of a supra-normal consciousness. There are philosophers who, with General Smuts, strive to harmonise the latest scientific conceptions and insist on a definite creative evolution. According to Smuts, space and time are no longer homogeneous but, in his own language, have been reduced to a curved and warped space-time having a definite structure. A thing itself is not an event according to the system of relativity and; by a synthesis of such thoughts, Smuts arrives at the conclusion that life and personality are successive advances in the structure of matter which is tending towards free and harmonious self-realisation. Recent speculation is again reaching towards the affirmation made thousands of years ago on the banks of the Saraswati and Ganges, namely *Tatvamasi* or 'THAT thou art' and *So'ham,* 'I am He,' which pre-suppose the oneness of all things, conscious and unconscious, self and non-self. The estrangement between science and philosophy which was so marked at an earlier epoch is thus being abolished and the tendency of modern physics has had a counterpart in the tendency of philosophy to think of reality as a flux of events rather than as substantial. Matter seems to lose its material characteristic, and what has been affirmed as the principle of indeterminacy and its application of free-will have profoundly modified old conceptions and altered the reliance on probabilities. In many scientific quarters this symbolism has led to a mysticism which is not very different from the

message conveyed in the following passage from *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad*:

> He dwelling in the Ākāśa (or Cosmic substance) is within the Ākāśa, whom the Ākāśa does not know, whose body is the Ākāśa, who from within rules the Ākāśa, is Thy Soul, Thy Inner Ruler, the Undying.

Looking back over the events of the last few years, it must be realised that the progress of the positive and applied sciences and the phenomenal industrial growth have given birth to modern socialism as well as the present-day manifestations of competitive life. In certain other aspects, these developments tend to repudiate moral as well as other hierarchies. Beginning with the exaltation of the individual they seem to result in some kind of determinism and to suppress individuality. On the other hand, many of the orthodoxies of the world in essence appear to deny any collective evolution of the human race and confine the individual to the small space occupied between one birth and a death, man having been nothing before his birth and after death being destined to stay in hell with or without an intermediate stage or in some paradise. Such theories seem, at the same time, both to exalt human personality and alternatively to reduce it to comparative ineffectiveness.

At this juncture, I hold that the world has a great deal to learn from the Hindu attitude to religion and life. The Hindu philosophy of religion, as actually defined by Professor Radhakrishnan, starts from and returns to an experimental basis. It is not dependent upon the acceptance of a particular kind of spiritual life or experience. It is catholic in the larger sense and admits of points of view other than its own. Every belief and every system which uplifts a man's soul is regarded as authentic. It is not a definite dogmatic creed but a unified mass of spiritual thought and realisation. Many sects professing different beliefs are within its fold. It matters not whether the Seer who has the insight has dreamed his way to

the truth in the shadow of the temple or the tabernacle, the church or the mosque. The student of sociology, myths and religions is daily becoming more tolerant to other faiths than his own. The innate temperament of the people, the spirit of the times and the needs of the moment, these determine the character of religion and philosophy which are increasingly coming to be regarded not as mutually antagonistic but as complementary and as tending to a common end and purpose. Many beliefs regarded as special revelations or as characteristic of professors of particular religions have been shown to be survivals of earlier practices and beliefs in widely removed countries. Dogma is disappearing. It is giving place to a recognition of natural differences which are nevertheless reconcilable with ultimate unity. In the work of the readjustment of philosophic and religious beliefs that is now going on around us, the method of approach adopted by Hindu teachers towards problems of life and of thought is an authentic contribution. To resolve the many disharmonies of the world, the doctrine of Karma will increasingly be a factor of incalculable value. This doctrine not being, as is often believed, in conflict with freedom of will, is, in fact, the logical corollary of the sciences which are dethroning the theory that the forces of the world can be manipulated or moulded arbitrarily by human or divine persons. The sublimation of the rule of law is the true meaning of existence.

—A Broadcast Talk, July 1957

V

HINDUISM AND TOLERANCE

QUESTIONS relating to race equality and the elimination of discriminations between man and man are fundamental and are constantly arising for solution in different forms and in unexpected ways. The repercussions of the recent Supreme Court decisions in the United States on Race Segregation in Public Schools and Universities have high-lighted the problem and demonstrated that even in highly progressive communities, race prejudices die hard. It is, therefore, wise and timely on the part of the UNESCO to take all possible means to combat racialism and specially to study and investigate the outlook of world religions and philosophies with regard to this subject.

India has often been described as a Continent in itself. Surrounded by rocky seas and by a continuous and lofty range comprising the highest mountains in the world, with only a few difficult passes, no large-scale or simultaneous series of invasions were feasible until quite recent inventions annihilated distances and resulted in modern aircraft and jet-propelled missiles. In the past, therefore, the incursion or irruption of migrants could only be by the process of sporadic attacks or gradual and protracted infiltration. In effect, it may be stated that the earlier batches of immigrants or invaders were assimilated before other groups entered the peninsula. Even prior to the earliest recorded invasion generally attributed to the Āryans, several ethnical elements must have been introduced

in India from the days of the palaeolithic man of whom many traces exist in the South. Remains have been found in the Bellary District of a specific civilisation and, in fact, the site of an ancient factory has been discovered with tools and pottery in every stage of manufacture. Later still, along the course of the Tāmraparni river, in Tinnevelly District, tools have been unearthed as well as ancient sites of pearl and conch-shell fishing operations. It has been affirmed of this period that the coincidence of megalithic monuments of Europe and Asia cannot be attributed merely to accident or chance; and there is reason to surmise that the graves in Tinnevelly as well as the remains of gold-mining in Hyderabad were due either to invasions of a pre-historic race or to the spread over Europe and South Asia of a colonising or conquering tribe or tribes.

It has been asserted that a study of pre-historic craniology has revealed that the Mohenjo-Daro remains are related to those from Ādichanallur in South India and those of the modern Veddas of Ceylon; and one archaeologist has gone to the extent of declaring that the Ādichanallur skull cannot be distinguished from the early Egyptian type. It must not be forgotten in this connection that there was a feasible land route in the ancient days from Egypt and Mesopotamia, through Baluchistan, to the Indus region.

It would, thus, be correct to say that the unity in diversity, which is characteristic of India, stems from a mixture of races and civilisations from the earliest period. The superficial diversity from the physical and ethnological points of view is, in truth, less significant than the resultant unity. That unity is rightly to be ascribed to the circumstance that the variegated peoples of India have, in the course of the ages, developed a culture and civilisation that may be rightly characterised as a marvellous amalgam. Pre-historic forms of worship and peculiar social practices like matriarchy survive, being

vestiges of the earlier race which is usually termed Dravidian. This Dravidian civilisation was, in all probability, co-eval with, or perhaps even older than, the Indo-Āryan culture.

Several hypotheses have been evolved regarding the Negroid or Polynesian origin of the primitive people of India of whom the Veddas of Ceylon, the Irulas and the Todas of the Nilgiris and the Paniyars of the Wynad are the existing survivors. The discoveries dating from 1922 in Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro and the quite recent excavations in Sourashtra of a highly evolved civil culture have brought to light the worship of the Mother-Goddess whose cult was spread over the Tigris-Euphrates region and South-Eastern Europe as well as ancient India. The horned Goddess associated with the pīpul tree and the three-faced prototype of Śiva-Mahādeva sitting in Yogic posture and the representation of the Phallus or Lingam were also associated with this earlier civilisation, and it seems to be obvious that these features were gradually assimilated by the Āryans whose earliest literary monument or Scripture, the Rig-Veda, does not either mention or pay special importance to these aspects. Two facts may be deduced from what has been stated: (1) that there were close contacts between the races and civilisations of Asia Minor (South-East Europe) and pre-historic India; and (2) that the spirit of assimilation was manifested from the earliest recorded times.

The Indus Valley culture which was advanced enough to develop an underground drainage system for houses and public baths as well as several varieties of artistic sculpture and seals came to an apparently sudden end perhaps by reason of the desiccation of the soil or owing to an alteration of the bed of the Indus and also by reason of the fact that the Indus Valley civilisation was essentially pacific and became the easy victim of marauding invaders. The so-called Āryan invasion which partly assimilated and partly destroyed this

earlier culture comprised several successive streams and was not confined to one period or one group of peoples. The Āryans themselves developed two separate sources of literary production and the main sources of our information are the Hymns of the Rig Samhita with which should be compared the Gathas of the Zendavesta. From these taken together, we get glimpses of the Indian Devas and the Asuras who were to become the opposite numbers of the Daevas and Ahuras of the Zendavesta. The ancient Āryans, before they invaded India, were hunters who cooked and ate entire animals and they used the fermented Soma juice on a large scale. Later, they developed domesticated animals and resorted to agriculture. The systems of sacrifice described in the Vedas partake of the indicia of the pastoral stages of the civilisation as well as the later agricultural stage.

Comparative philology proves that the language in which Zoroaster preached and that in which the Rishis sang were almost identical; and indeed, the idiom of the Rig Samhita has been stated to be a modern version of the Zendavesta Gathas. The Vedic metres, the Gāyatri and Asuri are reproduced in Zendic metres. Evidently, two groups of Āryans separated after a violent quarrel. The Vedic Deities, Indra or Vindra, Sarva and Nasatya became the Zend evil spirits but Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Vritraghna and Vāyu are divine in both the systems. It is, thus, apparent that after a period of unity, a civil war ensued as between Ahuramazd and the Asuras who fought against the Devas, the fight being typified by the struggle between Twashtri (the father of Visvarūpa or Triciras) and Indra. The Vedic Āryans asked their Gods to lead them to new pastures whereas the Persians clung to their old estates. The Avesta speaks of the general abhorence of war whereas the Vedic Āryans were essentially war-like in character. It may be the case that the Vedic Āryans were protestants or reformers and the Zendavesta group, conservatives

in character. These early vestiges are symptomatic of the successive developments in the Āryan and Indian civilisations which, from time to time, produced protestant and reformist tendencies adhering to some fundamental unities of thought but also practising the arts of assimilation and, later, of tolerance.

When the separation between the Persians and the Hindus took place, it is clear that there had arisen a definite conflict both of aims and of ideas. At a time when the two races lived together, Asura was a term of honour and worship and the Supreme Divinity in the religion of Zoroaster (Zarathushtra) is Ahūra Mazd (Asura Mahat, the great Asura). In early Sanskrit as well as in the Avesta, the word Asura was a term of great honour. In fact, the *Rig Veda* (iii—55—11 and 15) speaks of the wonderful Asura-like qualities of the divinities (Devas). Varuna and Mitra and various other Deities in the earlier Vedas were called Asuras. Later, when differences arose between the two communities, Asura became a synonym for a demon or a spirit of evil and the term 'Sura' was coined to signify the good spirits.

From the Vedic Hymns, it is clear that the Āryans marched *en masse* with their families and servants guided by a leader who was often a poet. They came into contact with the Dāsās and the Dāsyūs; but the point to be noticed about the progress of the Āryans is the very speedy fusion of the Āryans and the non-Āryans. This process demonstrated three phases: (1) The elevation of the non-Āryans and Aboriginals by inter-marriages between the Āryans and the non-Āryans; (2) The incorporation of non-Āryans into Āryan society in various ways; and (3) Social reactions by which forms of life and modes of thought of the two groups underwent a species of osmosis which became most pronounced as a result of the Buddhist protestant reformation.

It must be remembered that what may justly be regarded as a universalist attitude was in evidence in the earliest of the Vedas. The *Rig Veda* (viii-51-9) sings:

> The Lord God of Glory is He to whom both Ārya and Dasa belong.

In the same Veda (v-87-9) there is a prayer for the forgiveness of sins committed against the foreigner. The *Atharva Veda* (iv-16-8) goes to the extent of saying:

> God is of the foreigner (Videśya) as much as of our own land (Samdeśya).

The *Aitareya Brāhmana* gives an example of the manner in which progressive leaders of the Āryans facilitated assimilation of other communities. A Rishi was performing a sacrifice on the banks of the Saraswati and to the sacrifice was admitted one Keśava Ailusha, a Sūdra, whose learning is stated to have put all the Brāhmins to shame. Although the Vājasaneya Samhita condemned mixed marriage, it is, however, narrated in that very Samhita (*vide*, ch. 23, 30 and 31) that a Sūdra was the lover of an Ārya woman; and by the time of the *Mahābhārata*, such great personages as Vyāsa and Vidura were described as the off-spring of the connection of the Āryans with the other groups. The story of Śantanu and Satyavati, the vow of Bhīshma as well as the story of Ambika and Ambālika and the birth of Vidura are illustrative of the above process. Again, in the *Mahābhārata*, it is narrated that Bhīma married Hidimbi, an Asura woman, and Arjuna, a Nāga girl called Ulūpi. In fact, a new class of Āryans came into existence called Upakrishta who were admitted to the privileges of sacrifice according to the Kātyāyana Sūtra. By the time of the *Śatapata Brāhmana*, Sūdras became incorporated in the polity and a conspicuous instance is afforded by the Nishadas. It is a curious fact (*vide*, Pānini's Grammar, ch. VI, 62, 58) that there were groups styled Ārya Brāhmanas implying thereby that there were non-Ārya Brāhmanas also.

Parāśara, one of the pristine sages of India, married Satyavati, a fisher girl who became the mother of Vyāsa, the compiler of the *Mahābhārata* and other Epics and Purānas. Such inter-marriages or unions were of frequent occurrence throughout Indian history. The great Chandragupta who belonged to a lower caste married Kumārī Devi of the Licchavi clan who was either a Brāhmin or a Kshattriya and she was the grand-mother of Asoka. As is well known, moreover, the great Emperor, Harsha, paid equal reverence to Hinduism and Buddhism.

It may be borne in mind that the groups which afterwards crystallised into the Indian castes were initially not regarded as based on any gradation of superiority, the difference being functional rather than racial or communal. These groups, moreover, had their analogues in the Avesta and the Iranian names do not suggest the idea of colour or superiority. Co-operation of all the classes was needed for administration and a passage in the *Mahābhārata* provides for the presence in the King's Council of representatives of all classes of the population.

Most foreign observers note and criticise the rigidity of the rules relating to inter-dining and inter-marriage among the modern Indian castes and communities. There is a well-known stanza found in several of the Purānas which indicates that this rigidity was a comparatively recent innovation:

> The great sage Vasishta was born to a divine courtesan but by austerity and penance he was deemed and recognised to be a Brahmin. Self-improvement was the transforming cause.

Another passage says:

> Vyāsa, by birth, was a fisherman. Parāśara was born in the caste of a dog-eating tribe. Formerly, many non-Dwijas attained Brahmanhood by their achievements and their merit.

There is a definite tradition chronicled in the *Bhāgavata Purāna* that originally there was only one caste entitled

"Hamsa," and the *Bhagavad Gītā* affirms, "Castes were developed according to differentiations of Guna and Karma, *i.e.*, disposition or temperament and inherited instincts or aptitudes."

Both among the old Persians who are part of the Āryan racial stock and among our ancestors, the original caste system of three classes existed, based on the practical distribution of functions. The Iranians called them by slightly different names, and whereas we developed the Sūdra class also, they did not. But it was perfectly clear that this division of classes into the Brāhmana, Kshattriya and Vaiśya was not unalterable under all conditions. In the ninth Mandala of the *Rig Veda* occurs a passage, which has not been adequately appreciated. It reads:

> I am a poet, namely, one who composes hymns; my father is a physician; my mother is one who grinds corn on a stone; and my relations follow several professions.

The fact was that the singer of hymns or poetry at the time of the *Rig Veda* did not think it derogatory to him to admit that his father was practising medicine. The medical profession at that time, and in later days, was considered not to be quite on the top rung of the ladder.

The definition of the word 'Dwija' makes the position clear. Dwija is a person who has certain concomitant qualities:

> If a man's activities be derived from his jāti or birth, from his occupation, from study and from knowledge and if all these are found combined, then he is to be called a Dwija and not until then.

And speaking of people who, not having these qualities still called themselves Brahmins, there is a special word coined by the ancients which occurs both in *Manu-smriti* and *Daśakumāracharita.* In the latter it is stated that there were many people, who did not follow the occupation or vocation of Brahmins, but still called themselves Brahmins and masqueraded as such in the streets.

There is no doubt that when the great trek of colonising groups set out from somewhere far north of India, the incoming Āryans encountered races very different from their own, most of whom seem to have believed very firmly in the doctrine of transmigration. It has indeed been suggested that the doctrine of transmigration or metempsychosis itself was adopted by the Āryans from earlier settlers as well as the cult of serpent worship, the worship of Ganeśa (the elephant-headed God), of Uma or Durga (the Mother), or Skanda or Subramanya (the hunter-God). Some have even asserted that the Incarnation of Krishna was an adaptation from an Aboriginal Deity and that His life affords an instance of the mingling of the Āryans with the Yādavas. In any case, it seems to be clear that much absorption took place of the thoughts and beliefs of the pre-Āryan races with those of the Āryans.

There are widely-spread traditions of the southern migration of the Vedic sage, Agastya, the reputed author of several hymns in the *Rig Veda*. His hermitage or Āśram was situated to the south of the Vindhya mountains and he is venerated as the introducer of a new culture amongst the Dravidians. Indeed, he is regarded as one of the progenitors of the Tamil language and especially its grammar and prosody. He may, perhaps, be described as a great coloniser and as instrumental for the introduction of the Vedic religion and literature in the Southern Peninsula and especially as a unifying agency as between the Sanskritic and Dravidian tongues and ideals. He is reputed to have established a monastery on the Podiyar Hill. The Dravidas or Tamils were hardy peasant-folk and made good soldiers and sailors. They also originated the pearl and conch fisheries from pre-historic times and were skilled in irrigation. When the Northern Āryan colonisers, in the wake of Agastya, penetrated to the South, they found a fairly advanced civilisation already established. The

Rāmāyana speaks of Madura as adorned with golden jewels and the Grammarian, Kātyāyana, mentions the Pāndyas and the Cholas. Asoka's Buddhist missions were sent to the Pāndya and Chola countries as far as the Tāmraparni river in the Tinnevelly district. There was a brisk trade between the Tamils and the Red Sea regions in spices and precious stones and other articles of commerce. The West Coast of India bartered its ivory, pepper, coconuts, ginger, cinnamon and precious stones, the Greek words for such commodities as rice, pepper, ginger, cinnamon, ivory as also for the peacock and ape being either Tamil or Sanskrit terms. It is clear that there was an extensive commercial and cultural intercourse between the Āryans and the Dravidians as also between the Dravidians and countries to the east and west of India. This close contact between the Āryan and Dravidian elements has continued up to date and is manifested in every aspect of life.

In later ages, the Āryans and the Dravidians, after the apparently peaceful colonisation headed by Agastya, have flourished side by side and there is very strong ground for the supposition that the importance of Śiva, Śakti and Skanda was due, to a large extent, to Dravidian influence as from the beginning of Dravidian history, the cult of ĀṆ (Śiva), Amma (Śakti) and Anil (Muruga or Skanda) was a cardinal belief.

A remarkable instance of the continuous process of the assimilation of ideas is furnished by the introduction of Sūrya (Sun) worship into India. Both the *Varāha* and the *Bhavishya Purānas* refer to its introduction from Sakadvīpa, namely the territory of the Sakas or the Scythians. Obviously Sun worship and Fire worship originated in the Persian Uplands and were brought to India at a later stage when the Āryans had colonised North India. The *Brihatsamhita* says that when, in a temple, the image of the Sun has to be installed, the priest performing such ceremonies should be a Maga

Brahmin (Magi being Persian priests) and there is an account of such an installation in Mūlasthāna (the modern Multan). Hindu Brahmins were declared to be unable adequately to perform these ceremonies and therefore Brahmins were imported from Sakadvīpa or the land of the Sakas. The racial distinction between the Hindus and the Sakas or Scythians was eliminated and perhaps the common Āryan origin alone was remembered. Zarathushtra, in his *Avesta*, in fact, calls his country of Persia 'Āryana Vaiji' (country of the Āryans).

A consideration of these facts will indicate how composite was the Hindu civilisation. The *Sāma Veda* exemplifies this aspect clearly. It speaks at length of the Vratyastoma (a particular sacrifice or ritual) by means of which non-Āryans (Vratyas) were admitted to the Āryan society.

There was a period in the history of Indian philosophy when the Brahmin was losing his spiritual primacy on account of his concentration on formalistic ritual and ceremony and, at that time, as recounted in the *Chāndogya Upanishad*, when a Brahmin approached King Janaka with the request to teach him the Brahma Vidyā or the Supreme Truth, the reason assigned was that the Brahma Vidyā had not been adequately pursued by the Brahmins and that it was the Kshattriya's prerogative.

Also in the *Chāndogya Upanishad*, when Śwetaketa Aruneya went to the court of the King of the Pānchālas, the King put him the question whether he was taught why and whence people come to be born in this world. He said, "No". He came back to his father, Gautama, and said: "Oh, father, I thought that I had been taught all the lessons and went to the King full of pride of my knowledge and asked for recognition. But he put to me a question, which I found difficult to answer." He asked his father to

answer the question, but Gautama too said that he could not answer the question. They went to the King. The King honoured the Brahmin with gifts, cows and money, but Gautama said that he did not want those gifts and asked the King to answer the question which was put to his son. Then came the reply:

> Before you, this knowledge, this truth of Ātma Vidya was not the property of the Brahmin.

The Brahmin had not learned those Upanishadic truths which were then the heritage of the Kshattriyas.

It may be noted that very soon thereafter, in the course of a few hundred years, the position was reversed and the *Kaushītaki Upanishad* (vi-18) asserts:

> It is contrary to the rules of nature that Kshattriyas should instruct Brahmins in the Sacred Truths.

These extracts demonstrate that the position and status of the castes were fluidic down to the times of the *Upanishads* and the early *Purānas*.

The *Upanishads* furnish other instances of the conflicts between Brahmins and Kshattriyas in which they alternately assumed importance as possessors and expounders of the Divine Truth and of Brahman and Ātman.

Rationalistic tendencies existed even before the time of Gautama Buddha and opposition to Vedic sacrifices and Vedic theology was in evidence even at the time of the *Rig Veda* where, in one passage, Yathi is used in the sense of one who condemns sacrifices. Probably, these Yathis were religious leaders of the non-Āryans. Later on, the word Yathi came to denote any ascetic or holy man. Koutsa led the thinkers in the Vedic times who were opposed to the authority of the Vedas; but the opposition to sacrifices and rituals, the popularisation of the popular language Prākrit and the equalisation of all castes and communities, were brought to a head by Gautama Buddha. It is, however,

remarkable that Buddha did not regard himself as an opponent of the Brāhminic civilisation but furnished a conspicuous example of toleration and assimilation. He accepts as axiomatic, Karma and Rebirth. He says:

> My action is my possession; my action is my inheritance; my action is the race to which I belong; my action is my refuge.

He offered his followers a scheme of spiritual development and not a set of doctrines. His teaching was declared to be a way and not a creed. He was aware that the espousal of a creed is too often an excuse or justification for the abandonment of the search. Buddha was, in the form in which he cast his ideas, largely moulded by the habits of thought and action that surrounded him. It is not too much to say that it is from the earlier *Upanishads* that Buddha's teachings were largely derived. He himself says:

> There are these four Truths of the Brahmins which have been realised by me, by my own higher knowledge and made known.

Max Müller goes so far as to observe in one of his essays:

> Buddhism is the highest form of Brāhminism, everything esoteric being abolished, the priesthood being replaced by monks who were to be the successors and representatives of the forest dwellers of the former ages.

It may be said that both Buddha and Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism, while admitting that the Brahmin ideal is the right one, yet led a crusade against certain recently developed aspects of Brahmin culture and tradition. On the appearance of Buddha and Mahāvīra, the Hindu civilisation adapted many of the ideals and precepts of Buddhism and Jainism. Thus, instead of animal sacrifices involving the killing of horses and goats, Śritapasu and Pishtapasu, namely, offerings of ghee, rice, etc., were made by several communities and groups. This was the method adopted to reconcile the opinions of those who shunned the taking of life with the convictions of those who thought the Vedic system of ritualism was sacrosanct. In the result, the use of meat and of

fermented liquor was abandoned by many Indian communities, both Brahmin and non-Brahmin. Originally, of course, the Brahmin did not disdain to take meat and, in fact, even today in Kashmir they are allowed to use meat and in certain places such as Bengal, the use of fish is common. But, in general, it can be affirmed that the Brahmin is a vegetarian and a teetotaler. This development must be regarded as at least partially due to the influence of the ideas developed by Buddha and especially Mahāvīra.

Basava, who himself was a Brahmin and who was the Prime Minister of a King who ruled at Kalyan near Bombay, started the Lingāyat cult. He organised a revolt against many orthodox practices and usages of the Brahmins and founded an entirely puritan sect amongst whose followers vegetarianism and abstention from liquor were enforced and rigidly monotheistic Śiva worship was enforced.

In a Buddhistic Scripture (*Udana* 1, 8), this is how the caste distinction is commented upon:

> By one's actions one becomes a Brāhmana, or a Kshattriya or a Vaiśya or a Sūdra.

Buddha did not completely abolish the caste system among the laity. He only did it in the Sanga, *i.e.*, those who renounced the world. But Buddha rejected the authority of the Vedas. The teacher who went to the logical extreme and insisted on practical ethics uninfluenced by the idea of any Creator was Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism. In the Jain Scripture, *Nirgrantha Pravachana* (7, 18) it is stated:

> One is not a monk merely by the shaving clean of the head, nor is one a Brāhmana (priest) by the mere recital of the syllable OM; one is not a sage by mere residence in woods; so also one is not a hermit by using sacred grass and bark garments.

It will, however, not be forgotten that the supremacy of the ethical is the clue to Buddha's teachings which have a wholly practical outlook, the Buddha rejecting the

conception of God as a Being taking sides in our struggles or functioning as a supernatural Ruler or Tyrant. Although he discouraged doctrinal controversies as prejudicial to inward peace and ethical striving, he made it clear that the evolving of a new personality is more important than speculation on the universe and its origin and purpose. In Chapter 26 of the *Dhammapāda* which is entitled Brāhmana Vaggo, the term Brāhmana is accepted by the Buddha as one who has realised true knowledge. The Buddha says:

> Him I call a Brahmin for whom there is neither this shore nor that shore nor both, who is free from fear and free from shackles.

He adds:

> One should not attack a Brahmin. Let not the Brahmin let loose his anger. Woe to him who hurts a Brahmin and more woe to him who lets his anger on the evil-doer.

Finally, he says:

> Nor by matted hair nor by lineage nor by caste, does one become a Brahmin. He is a Brahmin in whom there are truth and righteousness.

As a climax, in the 396th verse of the Brāhmana Vaggo, Buddha declares:

> I do not call him a Brahmin because of his origin or of his mother. Him I call a Brahmin who is free from riches and free from attachments.

In his book on Buddhism, Professor Rhys Davids, in fact, asserts:

> Gautama's whole training was Brāhminism. He probably deemed himself to be the most correct exponent of the spirit as distinguished from the letter of the ancient faith. In other words, Buddha's teaching was a re-statement of the thoughts of the Upanishads with a new emphasis. The religion of Buddha grew and flourished within the fold of the orthodox faith as the Upanishads and many free-thinking sects did.

The Edicts of Asoka which not only encouraged but gave practical illustrations of Buddhist philosophy in action elucidate the essential spirit of Buddhism which is an inheritance from Hindu thought. In Rock Edict 12, Asoka says:

> As proper occasions arise, persons of other religions should also be honoured suitably. Acting in a contrary manner, one injures one's own religion and also does disservice to the religions of others.

He adds:

> It is necessary to guard one's own speech so as to avoid the extolling of one's own religion to the decrying or speaking lightly of the religion of another.

It is impossible to elucidate the spirit of tolerance better than by a later passage in the same Rock Edict:

> One who reverences one's own religion and disparages that of another from devotion to one's own religion and to glorify it over all religions, injures one's own religion certainly.

The climax is reached with the affirmation:

> It is verily the concord of all religions that is meritorious, because persons of other ways of thinking would thus hear the Dharma and serve its cause.

As a corollary to this great truth, in Rock Edict 13, Asoka, the conqueror of Kalinga, repents of his action and declares:

> Conquest is no conquest, for in all conquests there is killing, death or banishment of people.

And he adds:

> My sons and grandsons should not undertake further conquests. The only true conquest is the conquest by Dharma.

By the protestant or reformist development embodied in Buddhism and the co-eval movement of Janism which, as already stated, insisted on the physical and psychological mastery over the self and a deep concern for the welfare of all beings, the Hindu thought was much influenced. Buddha, indeed, was declared to be an Avatār of Vishnu and ultimately what was once Brāhminism or at the most, Brahmin-Kshattriya philosophy became Hinduism. The introduction of the concept of personal Gods and the evolution of the Epics and the Purānas had, as a result, the assimilation of the indigenous Deities and the consequent re-absorption of some of the former dissident or opposing trends of thought. Jainism, thus, as time passes by, becomes closely related to the mother religion, though accentuating the ascetic ideals. Many of the teachings of the Buddha have become the

characteristics of later philosophic thought. The *Bhagavad Gītā* itself embodies a transition between abstract speculation and the popular concept of Bhakti or devotion to a personal God.

Associated with the sacred town of Chidambaram in the South of India, is a story of an outcaste or untouchable named Nanda who ardently craved the boon of entering and worshipping in the temple of Natarāja, the Cosmic Dancer, and was denied such entry by the superior caste. But the presiding Deity Himself was so moved by the devotion and virtues of Nanda that He revealed Himself to Nanda and forced the Brahmins to recognise his nearness to God.

The instinct of universality and the feeling of the realisation of the Supreme must connote a sympathy with and a reconciliation of many forms of thought and belief. In his Hymn to Pārvati, the Tamil poet, Thāyumānavar, himself a Dravidian and non-Brahmin, sings:

> The supreme knowledge envelops and absorbs all forms of belief as the ocean absorbs all rivers.

In cultural and other matters, the close contacts that took place between India and far-flung countries to the East and West have been brought to light by research workers. As early as the *Atharva Veda*, a charm for snake-bite is supposed to have been administered by the daughter of a physician from Urga which has been identified by some as the Ur of the Chaldeans. Chandra Gupta Maurya adopted Persian dress and Persian ceremonials and the inscriptions used by Asoka in so many of his Memorial Pillars were in the Aramaic form of writing, *i.e.*, from right to left. The influence exercised by Persian sculptors on Asokan art forms, and especially the Stūpas, cannot be ignored. The Greek settlements founded after Alexander's conquests also brought about intimate mutual contacts. St. Chrysostom in A.D. 117 says that Greek plays were staged in India and, indeed, the name for drop curtain is Yavanika meaning the Greek device.

The Romaka and Paulisa schools of astronomy influenced Indian science profoundly and the term horoscope (Hora-chakra) is ultimately derived from the Egyptian word Horus, namely, the Sun God. In fact, the *Gārgi Samhita* declares:

> The Yavanas [Greeks] are barbarians but astronomy emanated with them and for this, they must be reverenced as Gods.

Many Greeks were converted to Vaishnavism and Buddhism, prominent among whom were Heliodorus, Menander and Theodoros, the first of them having indeed erected a pillar in honour of Vishnu and Garuda, His eagle vehicle. Even later, during the Gupta times, Varāhamihira, the great Indian astronomer, whose name itself sounds very Persian, admittedly incorporated Greek principles in his *Pancha Siddhāntika*. The Northern Indian formal costume comprising the achkan and pyjama shows the influence exercised by Persian fashions upon Indian habits. And further, Kanishka whose dominions extended from Central Asia and covered practically the whole of Northern India was the patron of the great Buddhist teacher, Nāgārjuna, as well as of the celebrated Indian physician, Chāraka. He founded a Chinese settlement called the Chīnabhukti in East Punjab and incidentally introduced the cultivation of the peach and the pear in India. It was only after the Gupta period and as the result of a reaction against what was deemed to be an injurious race mixture (Varna-sankara) that caste forms and caste practices became rigid and stereotyped. Much later, the contact between the Arab and the Indian civilisation not only helped to extend the knowledge of Indian Mathematics, Philosophy and Medicine to Western countries but also was instrumental in influencing Hindu thought and art. The introduction of domes, arches and towers in architecture as in the Taj Mahal and the Delhi and Bijapur mosques, the development of miniature painting and a

composite language (Urdu), which was a form of Karibole, and a composite music were amongst the many results of this cultural fusion. In this connection, one cannot also forget the unifying and harmonising influence exercised by poets and social reformers like Kabir and Guru Nanak whose object was to bring about harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims. Rāmānanda and his Muslim disciple Kabir inveighed against all institutional religion and the Sikhs, under the leadership of Guru Nanak and Guru Govind, introduced a catholic outlook and form of life.

Other examples are those of the Lingāyats of Karnātaka who have already been referred to and who broke through the tradition of caste as also did Tukaram of Maharāshtra whose followers included Muslim converts. There have always been certain sanctuaries or centres of worship like Puri and Chidambaram which transcend caste.

It is amply proved from the testimony of Tamil Epics like the *Śilappathikāram* written in the second century A.D. that not only was there no sectarian rancour between the Dravidian and the Āryan elements but also no hostility between the established forms of Hindu faith and dissenting sects like Jainism and Buddhism. In fact, this Tamil Epic celebrates the exploits of one Gajabāhu who built temples both to Hindu Divinities and to the Gods of the dissenting sects. The same toleration was carried by the Bengal, Orissa and South Indian colonists who established settlements in Cambodia, Java, Sumatra, Bali, Thailand and Champak. The Arab traveller, Ibn Batuta who spent many years in India until A.D. 1347, writing during the reign of Muhammad Bin Tughlak (who is perhaps mistakenly attacked for his fanaticism), himself asserts that Hindus were free from religious intolerance and that the Ruler patronised Jain philosophers; and he added that Muslim Rulers generally pursued a policy of tolerance.

It is well known that, according to an old Christian tradition, the Apostle Thomas is reported to have arrived in India in the first century A.D. but, in any case, at the time of Eusebius, there were Christians in India who, in his language, peacefully followed St. Matthew's Gospel. When, in the fourth century, the Sessasanid Persian Emperor began to persecute Christians, a number of Bishops and clergymen and lay people fled to India; and, according to the Kottayam Copper Plate (a grant issued by the King of Cranganore), Christians were allowed freedom of worship and also the privileges of the highest caste. Later on, churches in Travancore were actually built with the help of grants by Hindu Kings and the whole story of the early Christian churches is narrated by Dr. Fortescue in his book *Lesser Eastern Churches*. Similarly, the Jews, fleeing from persecution by the Romans early in the first century A.D., settled on the West Coast of India and received similar charters and were enabled to build Synagogues.

In A.D. 716 many Fire worshippers who were the ancestors of the present Parsees, flying from religious persecution, landed in Sanjan on the West Coast of India. They built Fire Temples through the assistance of Hindu Rulers. As late as the 15th century, the Persian Ambassador, Abdur Razak, asserted:

> The people of Calicut are infidels. Consequently I consider that I am in an enemy country as Muhammadans consider everyone who has not received the Quran, an enemy. Yet, I admit that I met with perfect toleration and even favour. We have two mosques here and are allowed to pray in public.

The rise of the Rajput clans which played a prominent part in Indian history is itself an instance of the Indian genius for assimilation. Many of the Rajputs claim to be Kshattriyas. There were many Brahmin dynasties like the Sungas and the Kawas who practically became Kshattriyas. It is argued with great plausibility that some of the most

distinguished of the Kshattriya clans like the Parhars, the Chauhans, the Pawars and the Sisodias are descendants of invading nationalities. These foreigners were absorbed into the Hindu fold and were furnished with Āryan geneologies. The expression 'Agnikula Kshattriyas' probably connotes a group that were converted by means of a sacrifice into Āryanism. The same tendencies which may be observed in connection with the rise of Buddhism and Jainism are observable in the development of Śankara's Advaita philosophy and the emergence of the Bhakti movement running on parallel lines of Vaishnavism and Śaivism. On a memorable occasion, Śankara is stated to have encountered a Chandāla or untouchable in Banaras and asked him to stand aside. The Chandāla (supposed to have been Śiva Himself in that form) retorted by putting Śankara some searching questions as to the unity of all existence. In the end Śankara composed a famous hymn wherein he declares: "My conviction is that on ultimate analysis there is no distinction between the Brahmin and the Chandāla to the discerning soul." The Ālwārs and the Āchāryas of the Vaishnavite philosophy and the Nāyanārs and the founders of the Śaiva Siddhānta and the Śāktas and Vīra Śaivas demonstrate a reaction in favour of personal devotion succeeded by the emergence of a devotional literature connected with the names of Rāmānanda, Kabir, Nanak, Mirabai, Vallabha, Chaitanya, Tulsidas and Tukaram. All these great religious leaders not only minimised the value of caste distinction (Rāmānanda's great disciple, Kabir, in fact, being a Muslim) but also made an attempt (as in the case of Kabir and Nanak) to assimilate the Hindu and the Muslim outlooks.

It must not be forgotten that, when masses of invaders entered India and the Islamic invasions became a regular feature, a process similar to the one already sketched with reference to the Āryan invasion, took place side by side with

occasional persecution. The Islamic languages, Arabic and Persian, were assimilated gradually but definitely with the Āryan vernaculars and gave rise to Hindustani. An amalgamation of the old and new forms of speculation took place and an inter-mixture of Hindu concepts and the rigid Islamic monotheism also took place.

After the fall of the Mahrātta and the Sikh Rulers and the establishment of British supremacy and after an interregnum or period of darkness, the same process of assimilating the new experience with the old faith continued and the Brahmo Samāj founded by Rājā Ram Mohan Roy, the Prārthana Samāj inaugurated by Justice Ranade, the Ārya Samāj which was a movement in favour of a reversion to the pristine Vedic ideals, the widely influential teachings of Dr. Annie Besant in connection with the Theosophical Society and the regeneration of Hindu culture and the remarkable attempt made by Śrī Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swāmi Vivekananda to found an eclectic faith based on the Vedānta, the work carried on by Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahātma Gandhi in purifying and universalising the Hindu faith, are further evidences of the eternal urge that has been manifesting itself throughout the history of India to insist on the doctrine of 'live and let live'. Kabir, for instance, claimed to be the child of Allah and Rama. He was, at the same time, profoundly influenced by the Persian mysticism of Jalaluddin Rumi and Hafiz; and, as Dr. Farquhar observes, it is an extraordinary but incontestable fact that the theology of Kabir was meant to unite Hindus and Muhammadans in the worship of one God. Kabir says:

> It is needless to ask a saint the caste to which he belongs. For, the priest, the warrior and the tradesmen of all castes are alike seeking for God. Hindus and Muslims alike have achieved that end where remains no mark of distinction.

The impact of European civilisation in India beginning from the 17th century was, on the whole, less significant than

earlier contacts for the simple reason that the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English and the French kept themselves aloof, in the main, from Indian thought and Indian life. The attitude of the European missionary was, with certain memorable exceptions, one of contempt and chronic opposition, to everything Indian. St. Francis Xavier, in a letter dated 1548 to King John III of Portugal in fact insisted: "You must declare to your officers that the only way of escaping your wrath and obtaining your favour is to make as many Christians as possible."

However, it is worthy of note that there were conspicuous though exceptional examples of scholar missionaries who studied Indian literature and philosophy with sympathetic interest and who thereby exercised a pervasive influence. Examples of such personages include Robert de Nobili, Father Beschie who was given the title of Manavāla Mahāmuni and the great Tamil scholar and grammarian, Dr. G. U. Pope who was called Pope Iyer. European modes of life and thought had a marked, though essentially superficial, influence over Indian life, this influence being exercised mainly through educational, administrative and judicial institutions. Social reform was accelerated as a result of the contact with the West, and Rājā Ram Mohan Roy and Keshub Chandra Sen sought to harmonise the two cultures and bring about better understanding. At the same time, an awakening or re-orientation originated with the teachings of Śrī Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and his great disciple, Swāmi Vivekananda, both of whom transcended limitations of country, community and sex and sought to make the Hindu religious conceptions universal and comprehensive. Śrī Aurobindo, a scholar and thinker deeply versed in Western and Eastern lore, endeavoured to create a world philosophy on Indian foundations.

One of the most hopeful signs of the present day is the popularity of new interpretations of the doctrines of Sanātana

Dharma or Varnāśrama Dharma which insist on the equality of all castes and reject exclusive privileges. Swāmi Vivekananda and Gandhiji have emphatically asserted that Ahimsa or non-violence involves the non-exploitation of races, groups and communities. Rabindranath Tagore, himself a product of combined Western and Eastern training, when he founded the Śāntiniketan inscribed as its motto: "Noman's faith is to be decried". The Theosophical Society and especially Dr. Annie Besant were instrumental in working for a common national goal to be attained by the joint endeavour of the East and the West. Gandhiji was always insisting that Hinduism must justify itself by tolerance and non-violence.

It will, thus, be obvious that throughout the ages, Hinduism, save in exceptional periods and except for occasional sporadic and reactionary manifestations, has abjured exclusiveness and has assimilated the elements of several extraneous cultures and accepted an attitude not merely of negative tolerance but of positive fellowship. Hinduism, with its off-shoots, Buddhism and Jainism, was thus enabled to spread its influence over a great part of the world and the later development of Hinduism has influenced Sufism and similar mystic movements in Muslim and other countries. As is well known, Emperor Akbar, like his great predecessor, Asoka, insisted on the fellowship of faiths and uttered these wise words:

> Each person according to his condition gives the Supreme Being a name.

Jehangir said of the Hindu saint, Jadarūpa, that he had mastered Vedānta which is the science of Sufism. Dara Shikoh, the elder son of Shah Jahan and the brother of Aurangazeb, wrote a treatise to prove that the difference between Islam and Hinduism was a matter largely of language and expression. It is specially worthy of remembrance that according to the leader of the Bahais, "one must beware of

making the word of God a stumbling block of friction or the source of mutual hatred ".

Every new and germinative idea was thus adopted without eliminating the appreciation of the old thought. In final result, divergent varieties of civilisation, religion and language have been united and have evolved into a culturally unitary organism. In the language of Dr. Heimann, who has been Professor in the London and Halle Universities:

> India, the country of an imposing and mainly tropical landscape, can embrace all different manifestations of thought, creeds and social activities without losing but so emphasising her immanent law taken from nature itself. Each single shape is but one symbol among others of the ever productive vital forces behind them all.

The same author epitomises the basic idea underlying the synthesis which is termed Hinduism:

> Manifoldness in unity, the interwovenness of all beings, of forms and of views; the transitoriness of every single shape, condition and standard of life; the fundamental concept that nothing is lost but every thought, word and action will have its fruit and will return in a new and increased form of manifestation. India's freedom of thought embraces all imaginable possibilities and even contradictions. Yet, it does not annihilate but rather completes each of them.

Dṛ. Radhakrishnan has declared that Hinduism is not a common creed but a common quest. Hinduism, properly understood, is not an organised religion nor does it depend for its validity on any particular dogma or even on any concept like a special incarnation or unique manifestation of the Divine. It seeks to include within its ambit and to recognise variegated expressions of basic truth. Such having been the characteristics of Hindu culture from the outset, it is not based on any racial or communal factor. In a citation by the Rev. C. F. Andrews, Mahātma Gandhi is reported as declaring:

> Believing as I do in the influence of heredity and being born in a Hindu family, I have remained a Hindu. I should reject Hinduism if I found it inconsistent with my moral sense or my spiritual growth. But on examination, I have found it to be the most tolerant of all the religions

known to me because it gives the Hindu the largest scope for self-expression. Not being an exclusive religion, it enables its followers not merely to respect all the religions but also to admire and assimilate whatsoever may be good in them.

Ahimsa or non-violence is common to all religions, but it has found its highest expression and application in Hinduism. In saying this, I do not regard Jainism or Buddhism as separate from it but as an outgrowth. Hindus believe in the oneness not merely of all human life but of all that lives. . . . The great doctrine of transmigration or rebirth (involving the continuity of life) is a direct sequence of that belief.

In the above statement, Mahātma Gandhi has elucidated the universality of Hinduism if properly appreciated. In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Śrī Krishna emphasises that anyone who follows with true devotion and sincerity any faith or worships any Divinity ultimately finds refuge in Him:

In whatever way men approach Me, even so do I appreciate and reward them.

Whatsoever manifestation any devotee desires to worship with faith, that same faith shall I vindicate.

When principles like these are enunciated, some persons may at once refer to the assumed inconsistencies between them and institutions like untouchability and the ramifications, inequalities and injustices of the caste system as at present existing. To such queries the answer is that every religion is, in one of its aspects, a revelation or inspiration; in another aspect it is a man-made organisation and suffers inevitably from humanity's shortcomings. Properly to evaluate Hinduism or any other religion is rightly to comprehend its heritage of thought and aspiration rather than its failures in practice to live up to its ideals. It would, for instance, be absurd to minimise the importance of Christ's message because groups of his self-styled followers have been responsible for the Inquisition and Witch-hunting, for the excesses of the Puritan reaction, for misdirected crusades and war-mongering, or for the deification of money power which is a portentious development of recent history. Misdirected idolatries and superstitions are chronic features of human history.

The Lord Buddha resolutely discouraged personal adulation and resolutely preached against those who ascribed Divine attributes to him; but millions of his followers have idolised and deified him in spite of the fact that his teachings do not postulate a personal God.

Most religions and cults have, indeed, been susceptible to idolatries and dogmatism of various types. One of the Indian Scriptures asserts:

> For the benefit of the ignorant, idols have been fashioned.

Such idols as Lord Bacon acutely observes need not be embodied in images. Some idols have their origin in human nature and manifest themselves in a tendency to stress instances favourable to pre-conceived opinions. Idols of the market-place, according to Bacon, are verbal fictions arising from man's association and he describes as idols of the theatre those that arise from dogmas and systems. To be completely free of all idolatries is to be truly an evolved individual.

When, however, the fundamentals of Hinduism are analysed, it will be found that, in essence, it has always stood against particularisms or distinctions and has stood for unity as well as the continuity of all existence. The later excesses and errors of the caste system, it is submitted, should not obscure our sense of perspectives. In a remarkable passage in the *Kūrma Purāna*, the following striking description is given of the country of India whose name was Bhāratavarsha:

> That country is named Bhāratavarsha where the descendants of Bharata live. Among the Bharatas, women and men follow different avocations and are known by different Varnas. They are devoted to the worship of different Divinities and they are engaged in different pursuits.

In an earlier Purāna, the *Vāyu*, it is definitely stated:

> He who affirms the superiority of one Deity (Avatār) over another, is a sinner.

It will thus be perceived that the Hindu doctrine has been based on unity and toleration from the very beginning

of India's religious and philosophic speculations. In one of the earliest hymns of the *Rig Veda* (x-121-2) the question is put:

> Which is the God that we all worship?

the answer being,

> Him who is the bestower of life and vigour,
> Whose commandments all cosmic forces obey;
> Him whose shadow is immortality as well as death.

And again (*Rig Veda*, i-164-66):

> They speak of Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, and there is the Divine, five-winged Garutmat.
>
> The one existent, the wise call by many names as Agni, Yama, Mātarishvan.

There is another striking passage (*Rig Veda*, viii-58-2) in which 'Unity in Diversity' is thus described:

> One is Agni (Fire) kindled in many a spot;
> One is Sūrya (Sun) shining over all;
> One is Ushas (Dawn) illumining all this.
> That which is One has become all this.

The all-pervasiveness and immanence of the Divine having been postulated, the Divinity is also regarded as existing in every order of reality, and the quotation from Gandhi above referred to is an adaptation of the sentiments contained in the earliest of the Vedas (*Rig Veda*, i-89-10):

> The Divinity is the Heaven, the Divinity is the mid-region;
> The Divinity is the Mother, the Father, the Son;
> The Divinity is all Deities, the Divinity is the five-classed men,
> The Divinity is all that is born and will be born.

If these be the thoughts which have animated every variety of worship and speculation comprehended in the expression 'Hinduism,' then it can be realised how tolerance is of the very essence of such a system. The fundamental and inseparable aspects of Hinduism are its fearlessness and spirit of enquiry (Abhaya and Vichāra), its reliance on an unalterable order or disposition of the Universe (Dharma or Rita), its belief in the continuity and oneness of existence

and life as connoted by the ideas of Karma and Samsāra and finally its insistence on the reconciliation of different faiths and beliefs which have been so pithily expressed in the appeals made on the rock-cut pillar of Asoka.

At the present moment, there are many factors, political and racial as well as religious, tending to divide races and nations from one another. We have seen the rise and fall of many varieties of intolerance from the days of Constantine to those of Napoleon, Hitler and Stalin and India has had its fanatics. Political arrogance as manifested by certain forms of Imperialism exemplified by Rudyard Kipling and typified by the doctrines of the White Man's Burden, racial arrogance as recently manifested by Germany, South Africa and Japan, and colour prejudice as demonstrated in many parts of the world, are amongst the causes of such division and internecine strife. India itself, notwithstanding its heritage of tolerance and its central idea of universality, has been unable to translate those ideals into consistent practice. Even Marx does not admit that all men are born equal and the rigidities of caste were the fateful Hindu answer to the challenge of racial merger. The practical difficulty of determining psychological bases of social differentiation led to the acceptance of birth as the ultimate criterion and classes degenerated into castes and untouchability and endogomy were inflexibly stereotyped and obtained a vicious strangle-hold on society. But greatly as one may deplore these accretions and unfortunate outgrowths, it cannot be denied that even at the height of orthodox pragmatism in India, there were protestant and assimilative tendencies like those illustrated by the Buddhist and Jain teachers and the Śaivite and Vaishnavite saints of South India and by reforming geniuses like Nanak, Chaitanya, Namadeva and Eknath. Gardner Murphy who has recently studied on behalf of the UNESCO the trends of Indian Psychology has, in his publication entitled *The Minds of Men*, observed that

even the stereotyped caste and family systems are essentially democratic within their framework. He has emphasised that at no time in the history of Indian culture has there been imposed on her any obligations or moral burden to adopt aggressive tactics like forcible conversion. It may, therefore, be justly contended that India's outstanding characteristic is a tolerant catholicity founded on the recognition of the principle of live and let live arising from a perception of the ultimate oneness of all Being.

The significance of tolerance lies in what is called " Synthetic Vision " by Dr. Radhakrishnan and Dr. Moore in the recently published *Source Book in Indian Philosophy*. As they point out, it is this synthetic vision of Indian Philosophy which has made possible the intellectual and religious tolerance so pronounced in Indian thought and in the Indian mind throughout the ages. This tradition is as old as the *Rig Veda* and all aspects of experience and reality are comprehended in this approach. Recent squabbles between religious communities bred of new political factionalism are not the natural outgrowths of the Indian mind but instead are antagonistic to its unique genius for adaptability and tolerance.

—Courtesy, UNESCO

VI

WHAT IS CULTURE?

WHEN the word "Culture" is uttered, there is a tendency in some quarters to confound it with something highbrow and affected. It is apt to be regarded as something apart from daily life and its struggles and limitations. It is now and then confused with some special mode of dress or certain forms of speech or some habits of thought by assuming which its professors are supposed to behave differently from the rest of humanity. No doubt, culture has its charlatans and pretenders as have most arts and philosophies. But rightly understood, culture is no more and no less than the art of living an enlightened life and it may be justly claimed for it as by the Stoic Emperor that nothing that appertains to humanity is foreign to it. Voltaire ends his most famous story depicting the chequered adventures of a philosopher in search of happiness and the El Dorado with the words "Let us cultivate our gardens," meaning thereby that in the actual and joyous fulfilment of the daily work in the right spirit and with the right perspective, lies true culture and true happiness. It is on such aspects that I propose to dwell for a few moments in the talk which I have been privileged to give today by the courtesy of the All India Radio.

Not many days ago I was asked to give a message to the graduates of the Travancore University after they had received their degrees and on that occasion I referred to a

passage from the *Taittirīya Upanishad* as summarising the elements of true culture. The passage exhorts the students of those days who emerged from their pupilage in the Indian Forest Universities to speak the truth and do their daily duty and adds that there should be no neglect of daily reading, daily reflection and daily teaching; but it does not stop there. For, the *Upanishad* proceeds to emphasise that there should be no neglect of efficiency and skill, of bodily alertness or of worldly affairs and no turning away from those means that lead to worldly prosperity. It is impossible to recapture the rhythm and the impressiveness of the original but my object in adverting to the old Scripture was to point out the many-sidedness and the composite character of true culture as here envisaged.

Culture or cultivation is not a matter of acquiring an accent or a knowledge of language. It does not need the acquisition of any jargon—artistic or otherwise. It should not be confused with a display of superiority or incomprehensibility.

Culture is not solely based on wide reading or scholarship though these are often associated with it. Some of the most conspicuous exponents and examples of culture, the Lord Buddha, for instance, and Socrates were probably not versed in booklore. It does not only mean the appreciation and enjoyment of art in its manifold forms though it is difficult to conceive of a person as truly cultured who is not responsive to the appeal of great architecture, of statuary and painting or the inspiration of music. What is required and demanded of the cultured individual is not that he has learnt much and filled his mind and soul but the harmonious result on him of the influences of Nature, art and literature as well as of life. One of the greatest of poets has defined the right attitude of a human being towards life and life's problems as comprehended in the words "ripeness is all".

This ripeness excludes not merely crudeness of thought and behaviour but all extremes of conduct and judgment. It is incommensurate with sanctimonious hypocrisy or that intolerance which avers that my *doxy* is orthodoxy and yours heterodoxy. A most important and formative element in culture is the concourse and friendship of men that matter. Landor puts into the mouth of Pericles the sentiment that the festival of life would have been incomplete in his own case if he had not lived with such men as his contemporaries, the great poets, dramatists and philosophers of Greece and enjoyed their familiarity and esteem and thus fitted himself to be a faithful guardian of Greek destinies.

With all these elements, moreover, has to be joined that which perhaps is most needed at this time and that which in the classic Apology of Socrates is so strongly advocated, namely, that a life without investigation is not worthy for a man to live.

I have cited these examples for the purpose of illustrating how true culture has been viewed by some of the greatest men who have lived. It were best perhaps to describe it succinctly not so much as a possession of this gift or the other, but as the adoption or maintenance of a certain special attitude towards this life and the life beyond. A cultured man seeks to acquire knowledge, both the knowledge of power and the knowledge of beauty. His emotions are trained and refined by the study of high literature and the contemplation of great works of art; but he refrains from mere academic theorising or lofty aloofness. Culture which does not involve contacts with life and all its roughnesses and smoothnesses is a plant without a root. This is the reason why the seer in the *Upanishad* insists on efficiency in the ordinary duties of life as a *sine qua non* of culture. Such contacts will alone enable the possessor to be free from that worst form of intolerance which is intellectual arrogance and self-segregation.

There is also the danger that a too exclusive addiction either to the sciences or the arts produces a fanaticism which may be as deleterious as the fanaticism of the ultra-doctrinaire. The avoidance of such lopsidedness was sought to be produced in ancient India by the insistence of the householder living the normal life and earning his living and supporting his family before he betook himself to the things of the spirit. A full life is a condition precedent to the supreme culture of renunciation.

The art of expounding one's ideas was again and again emphasised both in ancient Greece and in ancient India, firstly because truth and knowledge are always the better for propagation and also because true wisdom can never be tested and examined unless the process of discussion and argument accompanies it. One of the dangers of the modern system is that over-specialisation has become an accompaniment of scientific and philosophic development. The biologist intent upon the study of micro-organisms, the chemist in his laboratory and even the astronomer among the stars tend to lose a sense of perspective and proportion—a loss which is no less characteristic of the strenuous politician and the official or administrator engrossed in his particular metier. Each of these is apt to regard his work as the fulcral point of existence; and a corrective has always to be applied to the views and ideals of such persons.

One of the main reasons for the catastrophic developments that we are now witnessing in the world is perhaps the exclusive and aggressive devotion of the scientist to his *forte* and the preoccupation of the teachers of the world with the non-moral aspects of education. Not less baneful has been the narrowly commercial and economic outlook that has produced the universal and illogical craze of self-sufficiency whereby a small group of a nation endeavours to produce everything for itself and to sell as much as possible to its neighbours and

at the same time to keep out everything from outside. Specialisation, narrowness, exploitation, the deliberate ignoring of the neighbour's point of view have all been exemplified in the present conflict and are, in the opinion of many that count, the result of wrong national education and the absence of true culture. In the ultimate analysis, therefore, culture involves and implies a vivid awareness of the meaning of life, a conspectus of the world's problems in the proper order and relative importance and the deliberate choice of the things that are really worth while.

Religion, as distinguished from dogma or specific creed, must be an integral part of all true culture, a religion which will not descend to posturing or fantacism, which will be constantly aware of the great forces that mould the destinies of the world and will yet be wholly consistent with charity, comprehension and tolerance and a mellow understanding of the drawbacks and handicaps of oneself and society; a religion which may perhaps be best described as a constant and instructed criticism of life and a constant understanding of the difficulties of one's neighbours. To strive for the best and yet to be content with what alone is often attainable, namely, the second best—this should be the mark of the truly cultivated person.

Let me endeavour to summarise the essentials of culture by invoking the words of a modern poet who is not as well known as he should be:

> To things, not phantoms, let us cleave
> The gains of science, the gifts of art;
> The sense of oneness with our kind;
> To thirst to know and understand—
> A large and liberal discontent,
> These are the goods in life's rich hand,
> The things that are more excellent.

—A Broadcast Talk, 1940

VII

THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN CULTURE

SPEAKING TODAY on "The Spirit of Indian Culture," we cannot afford to forget that, under the stimulus of the Buddhistic faith which was adopted by Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, they were pioneers in the work of interpreting Eastern culture to the West, and in what is perhaps the even more significant and important work of enabling India to appreciate her own heritage. At a time when Indians were rather shame-faced about themselves, when they would by preference wear European clothes, live European lives, and think borrowed thoughts (there was no harm in that save that these were generally accompanied by disparagement of un-European ways, life and thought) two great and unforgettable personalities enabled India to remember herself, to recollect her past, and work for her future. Those two personages were Dr. Annie Besant and Swāmi Vivekananda. To them we owe India's self-determination, our self-respect, our feeling that it is worth while being Indians, being Asiatics, and also citizens of the world.

In speaking to you about "The Spirit of Indian Culture," I shall have necessarily to refer to various authorities. As far as possible, I will restrict my quotations to the narrowest compass, but I would do no justice to the magnitude, the scope and the ambit of my talk if I were merely to give you a popular exordium.

It may at the outset be useful to bring to your mind that many of the things for which Colonel Olcott, Madame Blavatsky, Dr. Besant and their colleagues stood, and for which they were derided, are now taken for granted. I may add that some of those ideas were known, apprehended, perceived by Indian thinkers ages ago. What has been sought to be achieved in the West by deductive work, by dialectics, by experimentation, by logical processes, was apprehended and perceived in this country largely by means of intuition centuries, nay, millennia ago. Quite recently there has appeared a book which purports to be a compendium of modern knowledge, synthesised, collated and referring to various scientific developments. That outline of modern knowledge is not produced by a religious person, or any spiritual society, not even by the psychical society, but by the hard-headed British editor of the London *Times Literary Supplement.* One chapter of that book was contributed by Professor Rhine of the Duke University in the United States. For about twenty-five to thirty years he had been hard at work, along with enthusiastic and efficient colleagues, trying out the problems of super-sensory experiences, experiences beyond the range of our five senses, things, for instance, like clairvoyance, like clairaudience, like what he calls telekinesis, the production of energy by an effort of the will, and the results are there in an absorbing chapter and they testify to a catena of evidence which is of a very convincing nature. Modern science, Western science, is tentative, experimental, provisional in its conclusions on these aspects of the matter. But it is worthy of note that this idea of the existence of reservoirs of energy, over and above what are known and can be tested in the laboratory of the scientist as now constituted, was a matter which was, as Patañjali's *Yoga Śāstra* will tell us, appreciated and apprehended millennia ago. The essence is there and it is now nearing the domain of experimental science.

You remember that throughout our ancient books and throughout our *Tantra Śāstras* and *Āgamas* great stress is laid upon Śakti, energy of various kinds. I am not going into what may be called the Tāntric idea of Śakti or energy, but the fact that the universe is in the main the product of energy, and that all things apart from Śakti and the prime mover of Śakti, Parabrahman, are illusion, was one of the cardinal doctrines of the Vedānta system, and we saw at one time Western speculators and philosophers, having a dig at this doctrine and being very sceptical either about the practical result or about the theoretical authenticity of this doctrine. But recently I was reading a book by Bertrand Russell, a hard-boiled philosopher, a man who has been a sceptic, a person who in his *Principia Mathematica* and his philosophical treatises has sought to throw the cold water of dubiety upon many cherished doctrines of his predecessors, and what does he say? " Modern science is tending to prove that there are no such things as things." In other words, what he means to say is that, according to the present state of Western science, this great banyan tree, this table, my good friend and myself are merely apparent semblances produced by ever-active and perpetually moving protons, electrons and neutrons, whose vibrations give the appearance of yourself, myself, the table and the tree. That is not Vedānta, but Western science, physical science, as it is developing today. In other words, it is very doubtful indeed whether Reality exists excepting in the sense in which the Vedas and the Vedānta conceded it.

Another example: You have heard of the Sushupti and Turīya states of consciousness, and you know what our ancients have declared about them. They, too, were considered rather fantastic doctrines, but within the last twenty-five to thirty years, beginning with Freud, going on to Adler, and glancing at the mathematical doctrine on the theory of indeterminacy, and coming down to Dr. Jung, happily amongst us today,

a new doctrine has developed of what is called the philosophy of the unconscious, of the subconscious. It is now taken for granted, and it seems to be beyond controversy, that human personality is only seen superficially, imperfectly, when you look at the apparent doings of a person. What a person does, what a person thinks, what a person will do on a given occasion or the day after tomorrow, depends not so much on what is apparent in his activities, or even in his motives, but upon the workings of that great body of unconscious, subconscious, and hardly apprehended streams of consciousness, sometimes inherited from past generations, sometimes impinging upon the person from outside, all of which constitute what may be called a submerged personality. Indeed, the proposition has been stated with some apparent authenticity that a human personality is largely like an iceberg, an iceberg which appears above the surface of the water only to the extent of one-sixth or one-fifth, the bulk of it remaining below. So below the known consciousness of the man is this submerged personality. That is exactly what was postulated in the whole of the Yoga philosophy in dealing with the Sushupti and Turīya states in the olden days.

Now all that I wish to point out as a kind of an introductory remark is this: That what has been sought to be discovered or demonstrated by experimentation was in a mysterious but nevertheless vivid manner perceived by intuition.

The spirit of Indian culture, according to the thesis which I shall present before you, involves three or four fundamentals: one of these is what in our writings is called *Rita* or Dharma, namely, unalterable law, the logic, the concatenation of cause and effect which does not pause for any person and makes no exceptions.

The second is the continuity of existence, beginning from the rock and the protozoa up to man, the angel, and the Avatāra. This evolution and continuity of existence is another

aspect underlying the idea of Indian culture which permeates the whole of what is today called Indian thought.

Third, the adaptability, the assimilative capacity, of Indian cultural growth.

And finally, and not least of all, courage, *Abhaya*, or fearlessness in facing all phenomena and events.

These to my mind furnish what may be called sign-posts, and keeping those sign-posts in sight we may be able to travel part of our way.

What is culture? Etymologically considered, culture or a cult involves two ideas: first, cultivation, tilling the soil; and second, worship. At one time these two processes were closely assimilated. Culture necessarily involves tilling the mental and the spiritual soils. The soil is composed of several components. And therefore, in considering the kind, the quality, the particular genius, of any culture, you must really consider the quality and the vitality of the separate component organisms which constitute the soil of that culture.

Many people have doubted whether there is any such thing as Indian culture, because they say it is so multifaced and all-absorbing. I shall indicate the type of questions I have been asked in America, Australia, New Zealand, and other places. When I talk about Indian culture, they say: " You are willing to worship a star, a stone, a cow or a plant, but at the same time you say there is an impersonal God and the universe is illusory. How do you reconcile all these contradictory theses? " The whole point is that Indian culture can only be understood if you remember that the underlying spirit of Indian life is that it adapts itself to every grade of evolution. Those who are apt for a certain doctrine, those who are apt for a certain discipline, are given the doctrine and the discipline that are suitable to them.

If you ask why images are worshipped, the answer is that it is necessary to concentrate a person's mind, it is necessary

to focus one's spirit upon something, because the human mind, left to itself, wanders. You know the well-known saying that thoughts are like many deer passing across the field of vision in a valley, and that the main object of philosophy is to choose one of those ideas, one of those fleeting deer, and then to concentrate steadily on it in order to know something about that one entity. This concentration, whether you call it worship, intense study, or experimentation, is essential. That concentration is obtained by some people by means of books, by others by means of images, and by others by means of poetry. That which fixes, that which arrests, that which concentrates your mind and soul is a thing which is your appropriate sādhana. In this connection I very often repeat the great argument of Lord Bacon with regard to idols. On one occasion Lord Bacon, in his great universal treatise, was dealing with the question of idols—idols made of stone, images or pictures. He declared that it is all very well to talk of these idols, but the real idols of mankind are very different. And what are those idols? Those idols are idols of the market-place, idols of the forum, idols of the theatre.

What does he mean by that? If a man insisted on a slogan, if a man had a preconceived opinion, if a man had a prejudice, and could not get rid of that preconception, could not surmount that prejudice, is a slave to a particular thought or dogma, then that dogma, that doctrine, that thought is a real idol more injurious, more cramping than these idols of which people generally speak. That is an aspect which, if you want to understand the spirit of Indian culture, you have constantly to bear in mind; that Indian culture depends for validity and force of conviction upon its ever-present consciousness that you can only deal with any given person according to his stage of evolution. And how can you possibly controvert that doctrine consistently with that very doctrine of evolution of which the West is such a

devotee? If, as a matter of fact, every organism is evolving, then at every stage a particular stimulus is necessary and biologically effective. According to the stage of evolution reached by a person he reacts best to a particular ideal—an image, a painting, a book, a thought, an hypothesis or a coherent philosophy. And some, like Śankara, are great enough to worship an image and to formulate at the same time the Vedāntic doctrine—Brahman is the sole truth and sole entity, the universe is illusory, everything is Brahman and there is naught beyond. Every thesis leads to a synthesis.

The spirit of Indian culture can be adequately understood only if you constantly bear in mind that it is an embodiment, first, of the doctrine of *Rita*, second, of the doctrine of Karma and Samsāra, third, of the necessity for Abhaya and Vīrya, or courage, in going to the utmost limit of the possibilities of your thought, and lastly of adaptability and tolerance arising from adaptability. I shall now deal with the last point.

The *Mundakopanishad* says:

> The Supreme is not attained by the weak, nor can it be attained by excesses of action or penance, but only by one-pointed concentration.

That is why right through our history Indian culture has always stood for the completest freedom of thought along every line of speculation, dogma or doctrine. Thus, for instance, in any compilation of the various Siddhāntas, or of the various books containing speculations on the highest possibilities of mankind, you will find that atheism, the Lokāyata philosophy, Buddhism, Jainism, and indeed every religion are comprehended. It is possible for a person to attain the truth, travelling in any way. A modern poet, not many years ago, wrote a poem addressing the Maker, and he exclaimed: "Grant me, Lord, the courage of unbelief." Even unbelief, if honest, can lead to ultimate attainment.

That kind of assertion of personality, assertion of the right to think, think to the utmost, has been one of the characteristics of Indian thought, and that is why you will find that a person who started, like the Lord Buddha himself, with a deliberate eschewal of ritual and ceremonies to which he devoted many of his reproaches and denunciation, nevertheless at the end of the *Tripītaka* has chapter on chapter dwelt upon the quality of the true Brāhmana and the manner in which the Gods should be treated. In other words, whoever has functioned in India has given himself the completest liberty of thought, and the result is that even Śankara was called, by his opponents, Pracchanna Buddha or hidden Buddhist, because he went to the extreme of Impersonality in Godhead. But that very Pracchanna Buddha was sufficiently a Hindu, sufficiently imbued with the intrinsic character of Indian culture, to have written some of the most wonderfully pathetic, searching and yearning devotional poems to several aspects of the personal God, to Narasimha, to Annapūrni, and to Ganga. That is a characteristic of Indian culture that the same man who could describe the world as an illusion could yet sing an impassioned poem in praise of personal manifestations of the Supreme. This courage, this latitude of thought, this flexibility of logical process, is an essential spirit of Indian culture.

Following upon that, there is another aspect of Indian culture and Indian religious thought which is perhaps unique. The man who levels any criticism on any religion followed by men has not understood what Hindu culture stands for, for Hindu culture, if it means anything, is the assertion of the equal validity of all revelations. It affirms that there is no point in thinking that there is one chosen race to whom alone a revelation is given.

There is no point in insisting on any special revelation, there is no point in thinking even of a saviour, there are no short-cuts to salvation; you cannot, so to say, buy a

fire-insurance policy against hell-fires. If you are true to Indian culture, experience or realisation is the only ultimate test for the validity and the appeal of religion to your soul. The Lord Buddha was asked by his disciples about the time his Mahāparanirvāna was to take place: " Lord, Thou art dying. What is Thy message to us? " He said: " I am not going to give you any message. I can only show you the Path. It is for you to tread the Path." What the Buddha said on that occasion the Indian seers and thinkers have said and implied on every occasion, namely, that true religion, the impact of true spiritual messages, comes to you and is realised as a result of experience actual or intuitive. In other words, personal experience, personal realisation, is of the essence of the attainment of Truth.

Keeping all these aspects in mind, I will select some extracts from our great scriptures to indicate the development and what you might call the evolution of Indian culture.

One of the most wonderful episodes in our scriptures is the incident in the *Kathopanishad.* On a particular occasion, Yama, the God of Death, had in his custody Nachiketas, and was so impressed with the spiritual yearning and fervour of Nachiketas and the potentiality of greatness in him that Yama asked him what he wanted, what worldly advantage, what wealth, what grandeur, what position, he desired. And the answer was:

> The only boon that I ask is this: After a person's passage from this life, some hold that the soul persists. Some consider, on the other hand, that everything about him passes away. The real secret of after-life is what I want, not your money, not your wealth, not your position, not pomp or power do I ask.

That was from the beginning the root-idea of Indian endeavour. In other words, what is often called the spirituality of India is really a feeling that every possession including life is impermanent and is not a thing to be quested after or sought out. The essential spirit of Indian culture is, therefore,

the yearning cry of Nachiketas, namely, that he did not want pomp and power and money and status, but he would rather have the secret of what happens to one after this temporary existence.

Similar was the statement of Maitreyi in the *Brihadāranyakopanishad.* The husband on a particular occasion wanted to distribute his wealth amongst his wives. One of the wives was Maitreyi. And he offered to give her all the wealth she required. And the answer came from the wife:

> Supposing you give me enough wealth to cover the whole earth, shall I get over the great hurdle of death? And shall I gain immortality thereby?

The husband who was honest had to say: " No, by wealth you can achieve many things but not immortality." And that is a second example proving that from the beginning there is this constant questing for something that is permanent, something that is not fleeting, something that is not passing away.

The next is a realisation that the individual soul chooses its own fate, which is a function of past samsāra and karma —and this idea has coloured the whole of Indian life. Time after time, wherever people have asked the question: " Why are the people of India without the luxuries, without the appurtenances, without the high standards that people should have, why so passive and patient, why is there so much apathy in India? " the answer is: " It is not apathy. It is a feeling that there is perhaps some justification arising from past experiences, from past births, for the present existence." That does not mean, as most people who criticise Indian culture are likely to think, that it is fatalism, that it is determinism, that it is a thing which people are willing to abide by, because they are hopeless. No, it means merely that there is an abiding sense of the intrinsic philosophy of the continuity of existence and the inexorable law of compensation, namely, that as you sow, so shall you reap, and there is no getting

away from either that obligation or that right. But subject to those influences you can still make your own future. And that is what has been very beautifully abbreviated in some of our scriptures.

> There are impacts and influences arising from past births, and impacts and influences arising from one's own present conduct and resolves, which make for the future.

That is the doctrine which has coloured the whole of Indian life. It is at the background of all our epics and Purānas. It is at the background of our philosophy of life. It is at the background of Kautilya's *Artha-Śāstra*. It is at the background of Śānti Parva of the *Mahābhārata*. All these, moral maxims, ethical maxims, maxims of conduct, depend upon this fundamental axiom of Indian culture that existence in the past, in the present, in the future, is a continuing current, that there is no such thing as a sudden break, there is no such thing as believing that if you do 99 good things and 100 evil things you must be damned for ever, or if you do 101 good things and 100 evil things you are saved for ever. That kind of what you might call automatic spiritual book-keeping and double-entry is negatived. You must suffer for each evil deed, you must enjoy the results of every good deed, but you must get beyond both the good deeds and the evil deeds in order to get beyond this trouble of existence. The idea of the continuity of life, of a stream of consciousness proceeding from eternity unto eternity, is the bedrock on which is built Indian culture. Along with that, there is a feeling of the tolerance of the Indian mind. In dealing with culture or anything else you must not equate it to what is happening today. What I am referring to is the possibility, the potentiality, the background of our culture. We may not have been always tolerant or just. It may be that we have fallen short, but my point is that it is this feeling of eternity, of unalterable law, this feeling of the stream of consciousness,

that makes us realise that there is no difference between one individual and another. The *Gītā* says:

> When you see all souls as part of yourself and as part of the Over-soul, then there is no fear.

From this it follows that there can be no fanaticism and no partisanship nor cruelty. The whole doctrine of the Vedānta and of the allied doctrines is Abhaya, freedom from fear. This freedom from fear—what present-day politicians call " freedom from apprehension "—is what is now sought for under the various pacts, (NATO, Baghdad, Moscow and other pacts). Spiritual Abhaya can only be attained if you see that there is no difference between individual and individual, between soul and soul. From that realisation it follows that there is no separate entity whom you regard as a God separate from yourself and the universe—the idea of God immanent—

> That One Universal Soul which is perceived differently and takes many forms and names.

Our ancients have gone to this extent that the man who seeks difference between individual and individual, soul and soul, and country and country, is a person who goes from *mrityu* to *mrityu* (from death to death).

From that follows the great wonderful saying of Śrī Krishna:

> He who worships anybody, or any Entity, with faith, with devotion, one-pointedly, serves Me.

It has been stated that all this is abstract, airy, fantastic thinking with no base, with no resultant reaction upon daily life. The message given by the exponents of our culture is as follows:

> So long as you have this body, you are definitely bound to the chain of causation, and the chain of causation demands acts, certain duties, certain obligations. Certain inescapable causes and effects are there, and there is no point in trying to get away from these things. Merely by saying I will not do anything, or by neglecting your duty,

whatever your duty is, you do not get that objectivity, that detachment, that passionlessness which is a condition precedent to emancipation.

Whatever work you have before you, to do it well is true Yoga. And, therefore, those who consider that these abstract doctrines of our philosophy and the fundamental notions of our culture lead to inaction are doing injustice to the sum total of our own teachings. Here is another idea which is particularly useful:

> Those actions are to be followed which lead to tangible and worthwhile results. Inaction is fatal to progress towards the Supreme Ideal.

In other words, efficiency, thoroughness, expertness in action are necessary to be accomplished even by the yogi or the man tending towards Yoga. And you will find that, not only in the *Gītā*, but as early as the *Upanishads*, in the great convocation address which is contained in the *Taittirīyopanishad*, the teacher tells the student:

> Do not swerve from the Truth.
> Do not swerve from Dharma.
> Do not swerve from that which will give you prosperity.
> Do not swerve from the path which will give you financial and worldly status.
> Do not forget that ultimately your self-enlightenment and the enlightenment of your neighbour is an equal duty as well as the duty to be constantly learning and teaching.

How can persons say that the spirit of Indian culture is intolerant, is apt to compartmentalize itself, is apt to elevate one particular section of the community and to degrade another section of the community? I am not going into the whole *raison d'être* at one period of the caste system or any untoward developments of the caste system, but let us remember that, at the time when the castes came into existence, they were formulated, they were created, according to *guna*, according to disposition, according to potentiality, according to a due but not an undue prominence given to heredity and the possibility of inheriting hereditary characteristics. Caste as originally devised was not a cast-iron division. And in

order to make that perfectly clear, let me tell you something which most of you may be aware of, and that is, that the great Vasishtha was born of a courtesan, and yet he became a Brahmarishi. It is said:

> He became a Brahmin by tapas. Self-perfection was thus his secret.

It is thus not correct to say that our culture is a narrowing or disintegrating culture.

Ultimately the thing that matters to man is not so much what he does with this world, what he does with his career, what he achieves for himself, but, as a great philosopher said, what he does with his solitude. How is he going to answer himself when he questions himself? It is from that point of view that Indian culture has been of the greatest possible value and significance. And that significance is best brought out by the tremendous and all-embracing tolerance which was originally enunciated and has been consistently followed:

> He whom the Śaiva worshippers worship as Śiva, He whom the Vedāntins worship as Brahman, He whom the Buddhists worship as Buddha, He whom the Jainas worship as the Arhat, He whom the logicians describe as the Prime Cause, He whom everybody worships in different ways, let Him bless us.

That is the way in which we approached the proximate and final problems, and that is why throughout our history we have not had as many religious wars or persecutions as some other countries. Indian culture, if it stands for anything, stands for the widest possible tolerance—a tolerance indistinguishable or inescapable from the fact that we regard the whole of the universe as knit together. Ultimately there is one path of salvation for which many different methods have been prescribed. A Christian mystic of the thirteenth century described his experience, affirming that after all God is not an object, God is an experience, and that is the spirit in which Indian culture has regarded the doctrine of Moksha or the doctrine of absolute unification.

To summarise, the spirit of Indian culture is a spirit based on courage, it is a spirit with a vision of an eternal immutable law governing all the processes of the universe, from the nebula down to the worm and the rock. It is a culture which postulates continuity of existence and of experience as of the essence of the universal law. And finally, it exhorts everyone to pursue unflinchingly the truth as he sees it. Ultimately, by means of that apperception of the truth, will come also the realisation of the other basic idea—that there are no distinctions between you and me and Brahman.

That consciousness can only come as a result of the full comprehension of all the intermediate processes through which Indian culture has progressed in the evolutionary process from epoch to epoch. The final consummation is achieved by a synthesis of beliefs, actions and ideals, by Abhaya, Ahimsa, and the composite Yoga of deeds, knowledge and faith.

—Courtesy *The Theosophist*, April 1957

VIII

RENAISSANCE OF INDIA

DURING the last few years, especially, the meaning and significance of life throughout the world, and not solely in India, have been profoundly modified. There was a great deal of self-complacency and self-satisfaction with reference to Western modes of life and materialistic thought which had captured the imagination and the homage of Indians. But that outlook has been disappearing even in the lands of its origin.

Let us take a survey of the development of thought in Europe and America during the last two centuries. It must be noted that in the distant past, a European nation, as also an Asiatic nation, believed in a Divine purpose as the animating and energising factor of all departments of life. The 18th century started with what was usually regarded as the enthronement of reason; and a great deal of doubt and scepticism and destructiveness was the characteristic of that century in Europe. Later on, an industrial era set in and economic progress marked the 19th century in Europe and in America. The 20th century sees quite a different situation; and there is a general apprehension, a general fear and nervousness. What is demanded today is an economic rather than a political stability, economic more than political development and above all things humanity craves a new kind of freedom and there is a new search, a search for security, security not on the ostensible and outward side, but security of thought and freedom from fear. I am not adverting solely

to that freedom from the fear of subversive or revolutionary tendencies or forces which you may call the Marxist doctrine. But there is a certain instability, disequilibrium, a feeling that basic foundations are giving way and that there are no new foundations to take their place. Very curiously the progress of science, until recently proclaimed the significance and value of matter—what is called materialism. It was thought that the universe was capable of an explanation by certain mathematical, physical and chemical laws.

The recent progress of science has been wonderful and unforeseen and if today an analysis or a review of the most enlightened of today's scientific thoughts were attempted, the verdict would be that matter has disappeared. We go back, in theory, into that region which was derided as impractical and born of confused thinking, that region of the Vedānta which proclaimed the doctrine of Māyā. In fact, the latest developments and researches in science have given rise to what I think, Jeans referred to, *viz.*, that the world is a thought in the mind of God who must be a mathematician.

In this state of things, when thought is in a state of flux and uncertainty and instability, it is well to consider what it is that India can do. And India's mission has a new significance and a new value in the context of the present-day world. I shall take certain criticisms that face us with reference to Indian thought and civilisation in general. It used to be considered that the mark or the characteristic of Indian thought has been its crystallisation, its stereotyped way of life, like its Varnāśrama which is considered to be a sign of social backwardness. Now in order to reconstruct the new India, in order to justify the existence of a renascent India, we must see exactly where we are in relation to this subject. It is rather odd that we are ready to accept whatever somebody else says about us, and that the inferiority-complex which was inveighed against us in the political sphere still

persists in the cultural domain. Renascent India has to reorient its ideas with reference to the original significance of Varnāśrama namely that it was not originally rigid, inflexible or based solely on heredity. The great Śrī Krishna asserted: *Chāturvarnyam mayā śrishtam gunakarmavibhagaśah*—" Four Varnas were created by Me according to one's disposition or tendency and also according to hereditary aptitudes." If we believe in the continuity of life and if we believe in hereditary transmission of tendencies or *vāsanās* through the ages, I do not see what other explanations can be asserted or thought of to explain the inequalities and imbalances of the world. If we believe in *krita-karma*, if we believe in the doctrine of the Sānkhya, then we must believe that a man's proclivities, his pre-dispositions and capacities are all the results of individual characteristics partly born with him and partly coming through previous experiences. If we believe that, then a Brahmin is not born a Brahmin; a Brahmin is a Brahmin if he has got the *guna* of Brahmin and the karma of a Brahmin. And that was the whole idea, the underlying idea of varnas and āśramas. And in a work of later origin but of great authority, the *Uttara Gītā*, where Śrī Krishna at the time of His disappearance from the world is supposed to give a message says that originally there was only one caste or varna.

The present-day ramifications of caste are later and heterogenous accretions. But it is said: " Our people are so conservative. What can we do? " I shall deal with it in a moment. The story of Nanda is a case in point. Nanda was a pariah, or harijan, in whom the love of God became deeply implanted. His master was a Brahmin who could not think of the possibility of his going to the temple and seeing the Deity. Nanda wanted leave just to look from a distance at the Deity during a procession. The master agreed to it on condition that he harvested ten acres of land that very night.

The Deity, according to the tradition, harvested the land for him, and when he approached the temple, the Deity appeared and took him into His bosom. Today there is a temple dedicated to Nanda in Chidambaram. But I go farther: in the *Bhavishya* and the *Varāha Purānas*, Sun worship was stated to have been brought from *Śāka Dwipa* into India. That is the land situated between Persia and Mesopotamia. The Purāna adds that an image of Sūrya was installed in the temple of Sūrya only by those called *magas*, that is, Persians. They were supposed to be the only people who could instal or perform the ceremonies concerned in the installation and the worship of the Sun. The great teacher Rāmānuja converted and brought many into the Hindu fold, in what is known as the Tengalai sect. In this sect an epoch-making attempt was made to translate all the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* into Tamil and to make it necessary and incumbent on temple priests to perform the holy recitations in Tamil as well as in Sanskrit. Conversions were made from all communities in the country, including potters, toddy-tappers and others. The conversions were made into Brāhminhood. They all became Brahmins.

I may mention that throughout we have had a history of assimilation, a history of transmutation and what in the language of physics is called osmosis. That has been the history of this country, and what has been possible in the past, I hope, should be possible in a renascent India. It ought to be possible for our country to rise to the occasion to realise the perils of a separatist policy and undertake the task of unification by social adjustments, by removing the excrescence of social injustice with regard to women and in other directions.

Culturally we have certain drawbacks and certain advantages. I firmly hold the view that a careful study of our *Itihāsas*, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Purānas*

ought to be made in order to lay the foundations of a renaissance of Indian culture. We should supplement such a programme with those lessons which Western education undoubtedly has brought to us.

We are talking of cold wars, and hot wars. But let us consider what was asserted as early as during the time of Asoka.

> After 13 years of fighting in the Kalinga land, after conquering the Kalinga tribes, I [Asoka] have witnessed all the devastated country and I realise that what has been achieved as the result of this continuous campaign and battle is this, namely: "We are supposed to be the victors but we are essentially the defeated. In war there is no victor, only the vanquished."

The history of the world, from the first world war down to this day is a history of the victor being humiliated and the vanquished elevated. After these wars it was found that it was essential for the safety and economic stability of the world to rehabilitate Germany, so that the economic stability of Europe might not be jeopardised. Similar was the case with Italy and Japan. I remember very well the speech of one of the leaders of the Opposition in the Italian Chamber of Deputies. He observed at the end of a Budget debate: "Mr. Prime Minister, the one thing that I want for Italy is this, that if there should be another world war, then we should enter the wrong side in that war, that we should be defeated in that war and then our economic and political future is secure. (Laughter)."

This lesson of the futility of warfare from the point of view of the solution of any trouble was learnt many, many years ago in India. You read the Purānas and the life of Rāvana and you will find Rāvana along with his pride and ambition and lustfulness had great virtues. Even Āñjaneya was dazzled by the great personality and prowess of Rāvana, but nevertheless, despite his colossal strength and valour, the pre-disposition to political aggrandisement and a

belief in warfare and conquest as an end in itself brought their own nemesis and ruin. But Bhīshma proved that even in warfare courtesy and forgiveness could be actively exercised.

Our culture has been that of an essentially peace-loving and tolerant people who believed in renouncing power and grandeur. That culture was part of the social fabric of our past. We should therefore remember the teachings of the past along with the lessons of the present. The secular state that has now been established should involve only complete impartiality and not the uprooting of spiritual influences, traditions and instructions. Today people deplore the indiscipline in colleges, schools and universities. The indiscipline of the young is due in a large measure to the indiscipline of the old. It is the sense of frustration, of incompleteness, the sense of being rudderless. It is suggested that science is making for indiscipline, that indiscipline in this country is a new phenomenon, and that it was not a characteristic of the past. If this be so I firmly believe it is because education at home is neglected or non-existent. After all school education is nothing, compared with the education at home which is more fundamental. There has been a large-scale migration from villages to towns and a growing urbanisation of society. What is meant by the secular state is that all religions are entitled to equal treatment. That does not mean that equal treatment should be ill-treatment. And I believe myself that unless a sense of true religion is reborn and revitalised as Śrī Ramakrishna and Swāmi Vivekananda endeavoured to encourage, we shall not solve the problems of our stability; because mental, moral, and psychological stability is not born of formal or political propositions or syllogisms. It is born of faith in something, and of convictions and aspirations towards a lofty ideal. If these be absent then we cannot get stability in society.

In our country a person can deny the authority of the Vedas and yet be a Hindu. The Jains and the Lingāyats definitely deny the authority of the Vedas. They are Hindus still. There are persons who very strongly believe in an attributeless Supreme Being; and there are persons who insist on a personal God as the only means of salvation; there are persons who believe that Śiva is inert without the functioning of Śakti; yet they are all Hindus. The only thing that makes a Hindu is his belief in the unity and continuity of all life and the operations of a just but inevitable law of existence.

So long as we hold fast to this basic faith we shall be able to rebuild our culture which will be based on the universality, tolerance and spiritual urge which together produced our temples, our sculptures, our philosophy and our scriptures, epics and dramas.

The precursors of this revival were Śrī Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swāmi Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Śrī Aurobindo Ghosh and Subrahmanya Bhārati.

—Lecture at the R.K.M. Institute of Culture,
Calcutta, 1954.

IX

THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC

THE FUNCTION of Music and its place in the scheme of life cannot be better described than in a sentence of Walter Pater, the great English critic, who declared that " all Art constantly aspires towards the condition of Music," meaning thereby that Music, simple or subtle, is, by virtue of its transcending all human language, the sublimation of the human effort towards that truth which is Beauty. Addison declares:

> Music is the greatest good that mortals know
> And all of Heaven we have below.

In our country, Music has been given supreme importance and, in fact, Īśvara has been identified with sound or melody. The Scriptural saying is शब्दनिष्ठं जगत् (the world rests in sound). The idea of Śabda-Brahman is pristine; and, from the time of the *Chāndogyopanishad* and, indeed, from the Vedic period, vocal and instrumental Music has been a part of the ritual of praise and worship, the devotees singing, dancing and playing on instruments and the great Gods themselves being described as Exponents of the Art. Śiva as Naṭarāja or as Vīnādhara Dakshināmūrti, Krishna as Muralīdhara and Sarasvatī who is invariably associated with the Vīnā, are examples that come to hand. Rāgas or musical modes are themselves supposed to be of Divine origin and five out of the six principal Rāgas are attributed to Śiva and one to Pārvatī. In other words, it may be affirmed that Indian Music is an integral part of Hindu religion. From

the days of Patañjali's *Mahābhāshya* down to the *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa, we have constant references to the association of Music and worship. In the South of India, it has been averred that one of the great Śaivite Nāyanmārs, Tirugñāna Sambandar, sang Buddhism out of India and he and three other Nāyanmārs or Śaivite Saints are responsible for the collection of Hymns known as Tevāram and Tiruvāchakam which are daily sung in Śaivite shrines. There are also the Prabandhams composed by Vaishnava Ālwārs which have been set to Music and are daily sung in the Vishnu temples of the South. A Sanskrit poet asserts that the path to Liberation is easy for one who knows the theory of the Vīnā, who can play on it and who is acquainted with (22) Śrutis and (5) Jātis and also cognisant of the principles of Tāla or musical time.

वीणावादनतत्त्वज्ञः श्रुतिजातिविशारदः ।
तालज्ञश्चाप्रयासेन मोक्षमार्गं गमिष्यति ॥

Mahārāja Swati Tirunal, one of the Rulers of Travancore, was a great devotee of Śrī Padmanābha and, in addition, an accomplished linguist and musical composer in several languages. He sings in his *Bhaktimanjari*:

तन्त्रीनादविमिश्रितं लययुतं तारस्वनात्युज्ज्वलं
श्रोत्रानन्दकरं चरिष्णुभिरलं ग्रामत्रयेऽपि स्वरैः ।
गीतं तावकनामनिर्भरसुधाजुष्टं न चेत् तत् पुन-
र्व्यर्थं व्यर्थमरण्यरोदनमिव प्रायो रमावल्लभ ॥

" A musical composition is of no value and will be no more significant than the confused noises of the forest unless it is performed to the accompaniment of the Vīnā, stressing Laya and Tāraswana and thus giving due importance to sweetness and technical expertness. Such a composition should give a proper place to the Swaras and the three Grāmas [Shadjagrāma, Madhyamagrāma and Gāndhāragrāma]; but, all

this musical effort is futile unless it is in praise of the Supreme and arises out of inner devotion." Describing one of those temple festivals in Trivandrum which, in those days, was called Śyananandurapura, Mahārāja Swati Tirunal furnishes an apt description of the necessity to appeal to the people at large and elevate their tastes:

विश्वजनकर्णसुखापादकनिनादवीणानिस्सरद्विविधश्रुतिमण्डलोद्भिन्नस्वरनिकरो मधुरतरहरिचरितमयसाहित्यगानेन दिवि लसन्तं हाहाहूहूमुखगन्धर्वनिकरमपि विस्मयेर्ष्याकुलषीभूतं कुर्वाणो गायकसमुदायः समुल्लसति ॥

In other words, the gathering of musicians during the festival pleases the multitude (Viśwajana) through the strains of the Vīna exhibiting various Śrutis and assemblages of sounds mellifluously reciting the exploits and glories of Hari in chants and songs which are bound to arouse the admiration and envy even of the Gandharvas.

It cannot be forgotten that Vālmīki's *Rāmāyana* itself was begun as a musical theme performed by Kuśa and Lava.

Generally speaking, the fundamental difference between Western and Eastern evolution in musical composition is that Indian composers paid very special attention to religion while love and war predominated in the Music of the West. This essentially religious aspect is clearly brought out in one of Tyagaraja's compositions. In the Chittaranjani song entitled Nādatanumaniśam (नादतनुमनिशं), he followed his predecessor Sārngadeva in describing Divinity as the embodiment of sound.

Both in the North of India and in the South, poetry was divided into narratives and lyrics and the history of Tamil literature demonstrates that even 2,000 years ago, poets and musical composers moved from palace to palace and from village to village singing songs and ballads like the troubadours of medieval Europe, their topics being devotion, the praise of patrons of learning and the arts, love or war. Indian Music,

in truth, dates from the Sāmaveda which avowedly consists of a series of Hymns or Sangīta (which is the combination of song, instrument, dance and expression). The system of seven notes was used in the singing of the Sāmaveda. Later on, a synthesis took place between the Āryan musical system and the ancient and indigenous melodies and gradually the grouping and nomenclature of the present Indian Rāgas came to be accepted all over India as well as the association of each Rāga with a particular time of the day and with certain emotions or moods. That local tradition was fully utilised is clear from such names as Gāndhāra, Todi, Karnāta, Gouda, etc. It seems to be fairly clear that although, in course of time, the South contributed elaboration and subtlety to an art which was originally more simple and racy and largely pastoral, there was a great mixture of Northern and Southern influences from early times in the Art history of India. Śārngadeva, one of the earliest writers on Music was himself a native of Kashmir who settled down in peninsular India. He classified Music into Deśi and Mārgi, the former referring obviously to indigenous and popular art, also described as Janaranjana (pleasing to the people at large) and the Mārgi style, being from the first, largely religious and stylised and described as Bhāvabhanjana (destroying Samsāra). The methods of composition were also different as the Mārgi style was described as Nibaddha and the Deśi as Anibaddha (free from the slavery of words). In the South, there was a definitely indigenous system of extremely ancient origin of which there are vestiges in the Sopānam style relying on its own instrumentation (*yal*, *nedumguzal*, etc.), and traceable in the Tevāram and Tiruvāchakam. The Deśi style very early predominated, on account of its general appeal, and the present South Indian musical Art owes as much to Purandara Das as to Venkatamakhi who, in his *Chaturdandiprakāśikā*, started the classification into 72 Melakartas and Janyas.

The great musician and composer of the South, Śrī Tyagaraja, who is reverently styled Tyāgabrahmam, was one of those who freed the Kritis from the disproportionate tyranny of words. Jayadeva, in his Gīta-Govinda, affirmed that he relied on three groups, namely, skilled musicians, true bhaktas and composers of appealing poesy.

The history of Indian Music and Dancing is closely intermixed; and Bharata's *Nātya Śāstra* and Nandikeśwara's *Abhinaya Darpana* are as important as purely musical treatises for the evolution of the Musical Art.

It has been aptly stated that Music provides only for Śravanānandam (pleasure to the ear) and the Dance affords pleasure to the eye and ear, Śravanānandam and Netrānandam. It must be admitted that to enjoy a concert of classical music, a cultivated musical knowledge is required; but to enjoy a classical Dance, such deep insight is not needed. This is why Kālidāsa speaks of the Dance-Drama as satisfying all tastes and temperaments and all sorts and conditions of men. Both Dance and Music are, however, now suffering under the impact of catchy and harmonium-inspired tunes and the infection of hybrid taste and we are in danger of losing that combination of purity, strength and sweetness that come of discipline and is the essential characteristic of our classical Music. Though a great deal is now being said regarding a musical renaissance and artistic idealism and though high personages connected with the Central Government, including the President, Dr. Keskar and the Ministry of Education, through the All-India Radio and the Sangīta Nātaka Akādemi and other agencies are emphasising the need to conserve classical Music, yet it is important that the public should be educated to recognise and insist on Sampradāya Sangīta, namely, the adherance to well-tried and characteristic traditions. There are distinct Sampradāyas for rendering Hindustani and Karnātic Music. There are different

traditions appertaining to what is termed Kacheri Paddhati, namely, the style suited to concerts. Śrī Tyagaraja himself was a great populariser of Music but he describes in one of his *Pancharatnas* the Supreme Being as the upholder of the musical tradition. The maintenance and propagation of high standards can only be attained by a combination of authentic tradition in fundamentals and freedom in detail.

Some attempts have been made in recent times not only to adopt Western systems of notation but also to synthesise Western and Eastern forms of expression. The Indian theory is intrinsically different from the Western harmonic doctrine or the Chinese system; and, as rightly observed by the talented Alain Danielou (who now uses the name of Śiva Śaran), to appreciate Indian Music, we must leave aside Western musical conceptions and habits. He points out that in Indian Music, as in ancient Greek Music and the systems prevalent in the Middle East, "the meaning of each note depends on its relation to a permanent sound, the tonic, whether this tonic is played simultaneously or not. The habit of hearing each sound as related to a fixed basic one has to be acquired by people used to other systems."

It may be taken that up to the time of the Muslim invasion, there was growing up a true pan-Indian system of Rāgas and Tālas. The distinction between Hindustani and Karnātic schools of Music began with the contact of Indian Art with the Persian and Arabian systems and it is generally believed that what is called South Indian or Karnātic school has remained truer to the old Indian system in many respects. In such compositions as Jayadeva's Gīta-Govinda and Chandidasa's Kīrtanas, the names of the Rāgas and Tālas are given at the beginning of each song and such forms and movements were largely all-India in character. In musical practice, the Ālāpa followed by a series of different rhythms and tempo was common to the whole of India.

The developments of Bhajanas, Kīrtanas and Gītas have not been dissimilar and, with a few exceptions, the names of the Rāgas and Rāginis were pan-Indian. By the 17th century, however, the separate characteristics of the Northern and Southern styles began to be accentuated and the catena of great Northern composers and musicians like Chandi Das, Soor Das, Mirabai, Tulsi Das and Tukaram on the one hand, and that of Southern musicians like Arunachala Kavi, Ram Das, Gopalakrishna Bharati, Tyagaraja Brahmam, Mutuswami Dikshitar, Syama Sastri, Ramalingaswami and Swati Tirunal, formed two separate embodiments of artistic effort though their innate outlook was not dissimilar. Kabir, Tulsi Das, Mirabai and Tukaram especially perfected a technique full of appeal to the multitude and they originated the various Kathaka and Bhajana traditions which exercise great sway over the people of Mahārāshtra and Northern India. It has been also recognised that Bengal had been the pioneer of the Deśi style of Music at least from the time of Gauranga Deva. Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, as he is called, was a protagonist in the introduction of Kīrtanas in religious gatherings. Bengal had a continuous musical tradition of folk songs and chamber music and, in later days, Bengal contributed to India the Vande Mātaram song and the musical compositions of the versatile genius, Rabindranath Tagore, and of Dvijendralal Roy and Atul Prasad Sen. The link between the North and the South was, nevertheless, maintained by Purandara Das and Ram Das.

As time went on, the South elaborated what may be termed Chamber Music which tended to be less popular than recondite and Laya and Tāla became prominent features; whereas in the North, even the system of voice production developed differently from the South so that today the two systems of Music can be said to run on parallel lines. And there are many who hold that each style has developed a

special genius and there can be no question of a sudden or artificial fusion. The Kritis, Varnams, Tānams and Tillānas of the South and the Kīrtans of Bengal and the Gazal and Khyāl of the North are distinct in their appeal and technique. But it may be asserted of Indian Music as a whole, whether Northern or Southern, that it depends on Rāgas corresponding to specific moods and on improvisations which are, nevertheless, guided by definite regulations. Thus, Indian classical Music is best demonstrated by a Master performer (vocal or instrumental) who is accompanied by the drum and the drone. Orchestration or the combination of several instruments seems foreign to its spirit and, so far, the imitation of European Orchestral Music has not produced notable results. What is called the Indian Band is often a disturbing melée of sounds.

In the South, Kshetragna composed hundreds of Padams dedicated to Gopala and he was followed by Arunachala Kavi, Tyagaraja, Mutuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri who specialised in the production of Kīrtanams. Mutuswami Dikshitar's Kīrtanams are all in Sanskrit and he was a follower of Śrī Vidyā. His compositions constitute landmarks in versification as well as in musical treatment, the choice of words and the underlying emotion being felicitously amalgamated with the musical treatment. Syama Sastri, a devotee of Kāmākshī, composed several Swarajatis embodying many complicated Tāla movements. Tyagaraja, on the other hand, sang almost entirely in Telugu and he was a protagonist of the Bhakti Movement. The speciality of Tyagaraja's composition is the Kriti which is a very highly evolved musical form, and the introduction of Sangatis as an integral part of Kriti is a noteworthy feature of his Music; Sangatis, as pointed out by the South Indian Musical Savant, Śrī P. Sambamurti, being variations on a musical theme used to emphasise the latent meanings or to elucidate the

Rāgabhāva. In addition, Tyagaraja is the progenitor of the modern Opera or Geyanātakam. He utilised the old Dance-Dramas like Kuravanji, Yakshagāna and Kathakali and he conceived the idea of writing pure musical Dramas divorced from Dance. The *Prahlāda Bhakti Vijayam* and *Nowka Charitram* as well as *Sītārāma Vijayam* are celebrated examples of his Art. It was said of Tyagaraja by one of his great disciples, Muthiah Bhagavathar, that his works were remarkable specimens of Deśī Karnāta Sangīta (देशी कर्णाट संगीत विचित्र सरणि स्पृशः).

One of the recent and noticeable developments in the South has been the rapid growth of Harikathas due largely to the influence of Meruswami who enjoyed the patronage of Mahārāja Swati Tirunal along with Kanniah Bhagavathar, a disciple of Śrī Tyagaraja. These Harikathas owed a great deal to Maharāshtrian models and are narratives of Epic and Purānic episodes interspersed with musical interludes. Through the labours of eminent Bhāgavathars, beginning with the renowned Krishna Bhagavathar and coming down to Śrīmati Sarasvati Bai and Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, they have, as greatly helped in the revival of the religious spirit as they have popularised the compositions of savants like Tyagaraja, Syama Sastri and Dikshitar. Jayadeva's *Ashtapadi* has also been a feature in their repertoire. There has been, in the South, an unbroken series of great theorists and vocal and instrumental musicians from the days of the illustrious Maha Vaidyanatha Aiyar, Raghava Iyer and Govinda Marar down to the flute experts, Sarabha Sastri and Palladam Sanjeeva Rao, and Tirukodikaval Krishna Aiyar and Chowdiah who made the violin as significant almost as the Vīnā. The Vīnā, however, still remains the main foundation of Karnātaka Music and its possibilities were magnificently demonstrated by Vīna Dhanam. Rajaratnam Pillai, Subramania Pillai and many others have excelled in Nagaswaram.

As experts in theory and vocalists, Patnam Subramania Aiyar, Ramnad Srinivasa Aiyangar, Sabesa Aiyar, Vasudevachariar of Mysore, Tiger Varadachariar, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Aiyangar, Bangalore Nagaratnam, Coimbatore Thayi, Madurai Mani Aiyar and Maharajapuram Viswanatha Aiyar of the older generation have been followed at no great distance by the present-day exponents, Musiri Subramania Aiyar, Semmangudi Srinivasa Aiyar, Budalur Krishnamurti Sastri, D. K. Pattammal, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, G. N. Balasubramaniam, K. B. Sundarambal and the ever-popular M. S. Subbalakshmi. The Tamil Isai Movement designed to resuscitate the Dravidian tradition and Tamil instrumentation and song anthology was discernible as early as in the days of Arunachala Kavirayar and his predecessor, Arunagiri Nathar, who composed the *Tiruppugazh* in praise of Kārtikeya (Kumāraswami or Subramania). Muthu Thandavar, Nilakanta Sivan and Papanasam Sivan, Vedanayakam Pillai and the talented and versatile patriot, Subramania Bharati, and Dandapani Desikar came after them. The Movement has enjoyed the patronage of the founder of the Annamalai University and several other prominent South Indians and enlarged the audiences and widened the scope of the present-day artistes. There has also been a long succession of great Mridangam players starting from the celebrated Narayanaswami.

Long narrative poems like the *Rāmāyana* of Kritivasa, and the *Mahābhārata* of Kashiram Das in the North and *Kamba Rāmāyanam* and *Peria Purānam* in Tamil-land illustrate the national bent. The celebrated *Rāmacharita Mānasa* of Tulsi Das was also set to music. The name of Tansen has only to be mentioned to demonstrate that, during many centuries, Music brought Hindus and Muslims together and both the instruments used in the North and the methods of voice production are the results of collaboration and

assimilation. Also, some of the finest exponents of classical Music in recent times have been Muslim Artistes like the Prince of Ustads, Wazir Khan, and his disciples Hafiz Ali Khan and Alaudin Khan, Alladia Khan. Abdul Karim Khan who was a fellow student of Bala Gandharwa, Faiyaz Khan, Inayat Khan, the Sufi Musician, and Pyara Saheb are as authentic and as widely recognised as Bhaskar Rao, Bakhale, Vishnu Digambar, Rabindranath Tagore and present-day artistes like Dilip Kumar Roy and Omkarnath Thakur.

To Pandit Bhatkhande must be ascribed the credit of a great renaissance and renovation. Recognising that the Muslim influence diverted or modified the theory and practice of Northern Indian Music and that, for many centuries, the progress of Musical Science had been arrested, Pandit Bhatkhande attempted to reconcile the old scientific rules with current practice. He devoted his entire life to bring about a harmony and he attempted to systematise Hindustāni Music and published and made available many compositions which were unearthed by him and had been forgotten. He was fiercely opposed by Ustads but his extensive study and country-wide tours and his visits to various Musical Libraries yielded fruit and the publication of his great work on Lakshya Sangeet was a musical event of prime importance. He expounded the doctrine of ten basic Thāts and endeavoured to demonstrate that every Rāga can be classified under these Thāts. His several publications have made history and he was the originator of the present-day Music Conferences and to his inspiration we owe many Music Colleges and Institutions. The introduction of Music in the Banaras Hindu University was due to his enthusiastic collaboration with the great Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. The All-India Music Conference owes not a little to his stimulus and inspiration although the credit for its inauguration must be shared with the Mahārāja of Cossimbazar and Śrī Kumar Dinendra Mallick.

The Indian Musician requires a thorough knowledge of the Rāgas and also the ability to improvise and he must be a performer as well as a creator. Even the comparatively simple Indian rhythms like Ekathāla, Thrithāla and Chowthāla are difficult for the foreigner to understand and, to quote once more from Alain Danielou, " although he admires the accuracy of the pitch and the variety of tone in the Indian drum, he is amazed by the variations and the themes which can be as rich in Indian percussion as in melodic variations ". It must be further observed that any form of counterpoint which is such a basic feature of modern Western Music is strictly prohibited in Indian classical Music as it is supposed to destroy the underlying modal sentiment. It has been pointed out, however, that Indian musical conceptions profoundly influenced Europe through Egypt and Arabia. The words ग्राम and Gamut are instances that are often quoted and medieval European Music was greatly indebted to Eastern influence (*e.g.*, the Gregorian modes introduced by Pope Gregory the Great who was at one time Ambassador in Constantinople). The divergences began much later.

In the South of India, there has been a controversy proceeding for some time between those who have created musical compositions in Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, Marāthi and other languages and those who advocate the increasing use, in concerts, of compositions in the Tamil language which, according to them, are best appreciated by and suited to the genius of the Tamil-land. Into the merits of this controversy arising out of the linguistic aspect of musical compositions, it is needless to enter, though it cannot be denied that the meaning or intendment of a poem or musical composition, as apart from its musical virtuosity, is specially appreciated by those in whose mother tongue it is produced. I may add that in the Music Department of the Annamalai University, an attempt is being made to reconcile and do justice to both

these schools of thought. The Banaras Hindu University has a Faculty of Music which is now functioning under Pandit Omkarnath Thakur, a well-known master of the theory and practice of the classical Northern style of Music. In this University, we are now attempting to enlarge the scope of the Music Faculty with the aid of a fully representative Committee so as to offer instruction in the several schools of musical theory and practice in our country, vocal and instrumental, so as to make this University a truly comprehensive and representative centre of all-India musical training, theoretical and practical. It is to be hoped that the members and sympathisers of this great Conference as well as Art lovers and patrons of Music throughout India will view this attempt with friendliness and help it with material aid and advice.

Let us remember that our age-long heritage of culture is based on the perception of unity in diversity and on the continuous process of tolerant but discriminating assimilation. Amidst all the variety of technique and theory, the fundamental approach to Music in our country is, nevertheless, that of

> A song that's gotten of the immediate soul,
> And instant from the vital fount of things
> Which is our source and goal.

—Inaugural Address, All India Music Conference, Calcutta, 1954

X

THE PERIL OF THE HUMANITIES

A NOTED THINKER referred to what has been often called "The Sputnik Age" and its overwhelming preoccupation with technological and scientific achievements and the bias that is everywhere prevalent in Universities and in all departments of life in the direction of the regimentation not only of science but of all life. He spoke especially of what he called the "soullessness" implied in the experiment with animals and with men immured in the nose cones of space projectile. He described the main features of the present age as comprising cultural anarchy, economic uncertainty, mental intolerance and the consequent submergence of human personality under monolithic systems of Government, for instance in the recently set up military administrations and *coups d'etat* in countries as far apart as France and Hungary, the United Arab Republic, China, Burma, Indonesia and the South American States, which are the necessary sequel of an ambition to rival Soviet performances. In this connection, it may be observed that although people do not, today, speak openly of the white man's burden, in the language of Kipling, nor openly advert to "lesser breeds without the law," yet colour discrimination and race prejudice are, by no means, things of the past as may be seen from the recent ebullitions of popular violence not only in the United States but in England.

An English poet, Siegfried Sassoon, who began as a romantic poet but whom the first world war converted into

a bitter and disillusioned writer, has described the present epoch in these words:

> Chained to the wheel of progress uncontrolled
> World-masters with a foolish, frightened face
> Loud-speakers, leaderless and sceptic-souled
> Aeroplane angels crashed from glory and grace
> Deliver us from ourselves.

It will be noticed that Sassoon's lines accurately describe the encompassing fear and loss of belief that have characterised the psychology of the younger generation. How different this mood is from that pictured by another poet, not many years senior to Sassoon, Francis Thompson:

> All things, by immortal power,
> Near or far,
> Hiddenly
> To each other linkèd are,
> That thou canst not stir a flower
> Without troubling of a star;

The real perplexity and crisis of today seem to arise from our overlooking the real meaning of culture. In truth, while all the world is in pursuit of power and of wealth as a means of power, culture, in the words of Emerson, corrects the theory of success. The man of culture is one who, in the impeccable description of Cardinal Newman, never inflicts pain, whose philosophy has taught him to be impartial and gentle, gentleness being attendant on true civilisation. Not only is gentleness the accompaniment of civilisation but also the feeling that was so eloquently expressed several centuries ago by a Latin dramatist:

Homo Sum nihil humani me alienum puto.

(I am human and nothing that is human is alien to me). Such sentiments and the conduct that is a result of the translation of these sentiments into action can best be fostered and maintained by a knowledge of what the best and the wisest of men have thought, dreamt, spoken or sung.

Culture is the acquainting ourselves not only with the best that has been known and said but, in reality, with the history of the human soul. Such culture is most easily and thoroughly attained by means of a knowledge and appreciation of literature and the arts which are compendiously described as the humanities, namely, the humanising agencies. The joys and sorrows, the dreams and hopes of all emotions of man as he faces the beauties of the world, all his terrors as he faces Nature's secrets, these lend their wings to the soul of man in the search for knowledge and what is more than mere knowledge, self-knowledge. Humanities have two aspects, one racy and the other universal. No great artist or poet can avoid being influenced by and giving expression to his environment, his tradition and his heritage. But he triumphs most who is able, in his inspired moments, to transcend these limitations and to speak in a language that knows no boundaries of time or space.

It is perfectly true that, as the Irish poet affirms, "each age is a dream that is dying or one that is coming to birth". The influence and power exercised by the Sage, the Seer and the Poet have been acknowledged from the most ancient times. In one of the Hymns of the *Rig Veda*, the Supreme Being is described as a Poet (*Kavi*) who, by means of His poetic wisdom is omniscient. (*Kavih kāvyenasi viśvavit*). Elsewhere He is again described thus: He, the poet, with His poetic power has demonstrated His beauty in the sky. (*Kavih kavitvā divi rūpam asajat*). The same idea is thus expressed by a modern poet:

> We are the music makers,
> And we are the dreamers of dreams
> Yet we are the movers and the shakers
> Of the world for ever, it seems.

Examples are numerous of the terrific as well as the beneficent power exercised by the man of letters. The French Revolution owed its stimulus and inspiration to men like

Rousseau, Voltaire and Diderot. Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason* was one of the contributory causes to the upheavals of the 18th century. Darwin revolutionised the thought and outlook of the world with his theory of evolution. More recently, man's knowledge of his sub-conscious life has revolutionised thinking; and Freud and Adler and Jung are bringing back to this world some of the intuitive teachings of the ancient Vedāntic Seers. Mrs. Browning's *The Cry of the Children* was largely responsible for the improvement of the lot of child workers in the factories. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* prepared the ground for Abraham Lincoln's liberation of the slaves in America. Marx and Engels have over-turned the political economy of the past and led the way to the socialist and communist ideals of today; and the India of today was led along the path of revolution which was nevertheless intrinsically peaceful by the efforts of persons like Dr. Besant and Mahātma Gandhi.

It may, without hesitation, be affirmed that if the main aim of life is to secure richness and variety of experience, to acquire that true freedom which can be equated with an exhilarating sense of personal incentive and the development of personality and individuality, then the best training therefor is through the humanities. So far as India is concerned, its poets and its sages have, during several centuries, worked uninterruptedly to construct a particular ideal differing completely from the totalitarian thought-processes. They had insisted and practised liberty of thought and investigation, but withal they insisted on charity and tolerance not only of differences in thought but in conviction, practice and daily life.

There is the danger today that, in our attempts to achieve economic and political progress quickly, we are apt to be captivated by the methods of regimented discipline which are stridently proclaimed to be successful in many parts of the world. Such efforts are often seconded by the Press, the

Radio and Television which can easily become instruments of adept propaganda and the blotting out of minority views.

True culture is impossible unless there is the consciousness that there is always some truth on the other side. Each civilisation that has functioned in the world has contributed its quota to the sum total of human values. India's contribution has been plain-living and high-thinking, the absence of money power or aggressiveness, the pervading feeling of the continuity of existence and the consequent conception of this life as one of a series of experiences and actions, past and present, which will be integrated into a future essentially dependent on our past and present thoughts and actions. Islam has been marked by a complete freedom from colour complex and the almost thorough abolition of priesthood. Christianity has brought into the world not only the example of the life of Jesus but the inculcation of charity and love for the neighbour. Lord Buddha with lofty detachment insisted: Investigate and check what I preach; if you find it true, accept it; if false, discard it. By his enthronement of human personality, by his eschewal of the vague, the super-natural and the unverified, he became one of the true liberators of humanity. And Śankara, many centuries afterwards, uttered the same truth in these words: "Wisdom is not attained except through strenuous personal investigation".

If we bear in mind the above treasures of thought, we can best envisage what the humanities have stood for. It is through the influence of our philosophers and poets that democracy has been put forward as an attempt to confer power on those who are likely to suffer most from power. It does not mean or signify levelling down but a strenuous and widespread process of climbing upwards, "Excelsion".

The study of the humanities is perhaps the best corrective to neutralise the domination of controversial politics and dogmas and through that study alone shall we be able to

avoid the intolerance which leads so often to pervasive hypocrisies and apparent conformity to the programmes of powerful ruling groups. In no other way can the importance of individuality and personality be sensed and implemented. The dragooning of the masses through propaganda and methods like brain-washing into social or political conformity is the very opposite of the ideal of true culture.

One of the most remarkable exhibitions of the influence of culture was the avoidance in India in the past of plutocracy and money power. The evil arising from a lack of true and wide-spread culture is mass escapism manifested sometimes by the acceptance of military rule, or by handing over responsibility and judgment to some person or group, and very often by giving way to the herd instinct or the crowd instinct. A crowd's behaviour is conspicuously different from the behaviour of the individuals composing it. An un-reasoning and hypnotic spell very often overcomes men in the mass where they have not been truly educated and rightly led. Of all the freedoms provided for in Constitutions the most important is the freedom from fear and it is the indispensable condition of well-being that there should be a definite distinction drawn between political responsibility and intellectual responsibility, between what is politically practicable and the search for the ultimate truth. The formation of opinion must not be subject to any trammels. The translation of opinion into practice is a different matter and should be accompanied by the spirit of give and take, live and let live.

The political spirit described as characteristic of modern society has its own place but it should not be allowed to trespass into domains that have least to do with politics. In order to achieve these ends, every attempt should be made not to succumb to the scientific and technological creeds which are apt to become dangerous idolatories but to

remember that the main implication of culture and the true end of education are the creation of a sense of proportion and a realisation of ultimate human values which alone will contribute to humane thinking and humane living.

—Lecture delivered at Bangalore

XI

INFLUENCE OF LITERATURE ON LIFE

JUST AS A PERSON who lives on the seashore or at the foot of a mountain is apt, by mere familiarity, to become unaware of the daily and hourly influence exercised on him by these natural features, so are we apt to ignore the indubitable fact that mankind generally lives in the light of great ideas and that almost always such ideas are derived from germinative authors. Not long ago, Keynes asserted that the ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Sooner or later, it is ideas and not vested interests which are operative for good or evil.

Dealing first with countries outside India, it is hardly possible to exaggerate the effect of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* and the Code of Hammurabi on the Nile civilisation. The meticulous regulation of daily life and the rigid and fierce monotheism of the Hebrews were, it need hardly be emphasised, largely conditioned by the teachings of Moses and the Prophets. The dream of the Jews for a world-state and, later on, for a national home originated with the lamentations of Jeremiah and the hopes and aspirations of a long line of prophets and writers from the days of Isiah, Ezekiel and Amos, and when the teachings of the Old Testament gave place to the new Gospel preached by Jesus of Nazareth, the revolution in men's minds and their ideals of conduct was wrought not only through the Gospels but mainly

through the influence exercised gradually at first, and later with a rush, by St. Paul who may be said to be the real protagonist of many of the doctrines of Christianity as we know it, some of those doctrines being indeed not consonant with the homely and moving parables and loving exhortations of the Messiah.

So far as Islam is concerned, it proudly avows itself to be the "Religion of the Book". The *Koran* is regarded as a supreme example of Arabic literature as well as an infallible guide to human conduct from the cradle to the grave and a witness testifying to the rewards or retributions after death. From Spain to China and the Pacific islands, a single book, the *Koran*, taken in conjunction with its commentaries, has helped to build up a very special and characteristic type of civilisation.

Most of the teachings of the Lord Buddha were oral but a very great body of literature grew up commencing with the Dhammapada and culminating in innumerable Jātaka stories and the philosophical developments of the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna schools. And by these means, profound modification was effected in respect of the outlook on life and the approach to the problems of existence in vast areas; and although in India, the land of its birth, Buddhism may be said to have become formally extinct, yet the teachings and literature connected with the name of Buddha have sunk deep into the national consciousness and much of the attitude not only of the philosopher but of the man in the street may be said to originate in them. The dominant characteristics of the Chinese way of life, namely, its fervent devotion to scholarship and respect for the man of learning, its quietistic conception of life and its disdain for the soldier and governmental machinery and the advantages and disadvantages that have followed in the wake of these characteristics can, without hesitation, be traced to the combined influence of the Analects of Confucius,

the teachings of Lao-tse and the special developments of Buddhism that originated in China, all these influences reacting on one another.

Adverting to modern European civilisation, the foundations of the objective and scientific attitude which has progressively dominated Europe, America and the cultures that stemmed from Europe were laid by Bacon in his several treatises and by Newton's *Principia* and the books that carried on these traditions. The structure of western society which preceded and accompanied the industrial revolution was largely the work of writers like Mill, Bentham and Adam Smith who brought into existence the *laissez faire* school of thought and the industrial life and environments that were produced by the acceptance of that system. And, of course, a tremendously significant example of the influence of books on life and thought was furnished by Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Herbert Spencer's long series of evolutionary treatises. It was a poet, Byron, who gave the stimulus and the inspiration to the War of Independence in Greece, and Italy's rise into nationhood was as much the work of poets and dreamers beginning with Shelley as it was the work of statesmen like Cavour and soldiers like Garibaldi.

The reformation of the old school system typified by Dotheboy's Hall, the improvement in the life of the factory worker and of the seamstress, the liberation of the slave may be regarded severally as the resultant of the writings of Dickens, Hood, Mrs. Browning and Harriett Beecher Stowe. And it is generally conceded that the classic example in Europe of the influence of literature on life is furnished by the cataclysmic effects produced in men's minds by Voltaire, Diderot and the Encyclopædists who waged warfare against superstition, battled for apparently hopeless causes, championed the rights of the down-trodden and the oppressed, incidentally also sapping the faith of multitudes in many

aspects of religion and many accepted standards of political organisation.

Rousseau followed up the work of these men with a series of works leading up to the *Social Contract* which was perhaps the most powerful predisposing cause of the French Revolution inasmuch as this book gave rise to a new battle-cry and a new slogan, the climax being the fierce self-assertion of the awakened masses intent upon securing for themselves the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. France, indeed, has been particularly susceptible to the impact of literature and Emile Zola reminds us of what a great literary indictment and accusation could do to right such a wrong as was evidenced by the Dreyfus case. The development in Germany of the theory of the superman and the elite race and the cult of force can almost be directly traced to the writings of Spengler, Nietzche and Chamberlain who were the spiritual progenitors of Hitler and all that he stood for just as Gabriel's D'Annunzio was the intellectual father of Mussolini. Hitler's own book, *Mein Kampf*, hysteric and disjointed as it is, was responsible for the refashioning of Germany and its embarkation on the policy that led to a world-war and to the hatred of the Jews and their persecution as the spear point of German regimentation.

Russia, until the other day, was regarded as the Achilles' heel of Europe and was generally regarded as backward in the essentials of life and culture. Although the spread of education was slower in Russia than elsewhere in Europe, yet in the battle against serfdom and the highly artificial, social and economic standards of the Czarist epoch, authors like Gogol, Tolstoi, Destoievsky and Turgenieff played a conspicuous part, not to mention Tolstoi's many-sided contributions to the philosophy of peace, non-violence and uplift of the depressed. In fact, it may be said that the revolt against injustice and inequality and distressful economic

conditions have been successful in Europe and latterly in America only in proportion to the enlistment in these causes of writers and journalists: Ibsen from Norway, Balzac and Victor Hugo from France not to mention Moliere, Bernard Shaw from England as well as the American authors of *Babbitt*, *Oil* and the *Jungle* were more effective social reformers than the statesmen and politicians of their countries. The modern industrial wage-slavery has never been so successfully attacked as by a succession of American writers who have illuminated the dark spots of an oppressive economic set-up. But perhaps the most conspicuous as well as one of the most recent examples of a complete mental and spiritual re-orientation of life owing to the influence of writers and thinkers is found in the work of Karl Marx and Engels. The former's book *Das Capital* concentrated on the undoubted evils of the recent industrial economy and developed the theory of the essentially evil character of the *Bourgeoisie*, the inevitability of the class struggle and the ultimate dictatorship of the proletariat. It furnished the inspiration for the dialectical materialism of Lenin and finally of Stalin. The growth and the resurgent appearance, in many parts of the world, of the Communist doctrine is directly and immediately traceable to a few influential books and pamphlets and the spread of their underlying ideas by means of modern propagandist methods.

The two wars have produced a literature of disillusionment exemplified in the writings of James Joyce, T. S. Eliot and others who have profoundly affected the modern youths' appreciation of life. The orthodox economies of the past and the political programme of the League of Nations were blown sky-high mainly as a result of one single book of J. M. Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*.

Turning to India, one of the most remarkable features of Indian life is its agelong susceptibility to the influence

of great writings and the organisation of its life on lines laid down by sacred and secular authors. Indeed, it may be asserted that whereas elsewhere the influence of literature has been temporary and transient, here it is a permanent and indelible thing. The doctrines of karma and of transmigration and of the continuity of life, imbedded as these have been in successive works from the days of the Upanishads down to the period of Swāmi Vivekananda, Dr. Besant and Mahātma Gandhi have indubitably moulded the Indian character and environment. It is true that the Indian rustic and peasant are illiterate in the narrow sense; but the strength and vitality of India which has enabled it to survive the crises that have engulfed other civilisations and other cultures can be traced to those lessons of philosophic calm and essential tolerance and of freedom from violence and to the cultivation of those special traits and virtues that have been embodied and illustrated in our sacred writings, the Epics and the Purānas and were later re-emphasised and explained in the writings of the great mystics and religious reformers like Śankara and Rāmānuja, Madhva and the Tamil hymnologists. The philosophy and ethics outlined in the popular Upākyanas or epitomes of life like the stories of Sāvitri and Satyavān, Nala and Damayanti, Mārkandeya, Harischandra, Puru and Yayāti, Rāma, Sīta and Hanumān and the heroes of the *Mahābhārata* are woven into the texture of Indian existence. It is true that literature itself is largely the product of certain environmental factors, and it is often described as a function of the country's climate or racial composition and reactions; but speaking, by and large, the influence of literature upon life is perhaps more direct and vital than the converse effect of the influence of life upon literature.

—Lecture delivered in 1949

XII

WRITERS' RESPONSIBILITY IN THE INDIA OF TODAY

WE, IN INDIA, have always been much under the influence of the writer. Need it be pointed out that the Indian national character, including its virtues, its temptations, its achievements and its failures, has been portrayed and, to a large extent, influenced and moulded by our *Itihāsas* and *Purānas*? The *Rāmāyana*, the *Mahābhārata* and the Purānas may be looked at from more than one point of view. They may be regarded as authentic revelations or as expositions and exemplifications of our religion. They may be viewed also as history and chronicle, more or less accurate. I have, for many years, been engaged in the task of studying these works not only as creative urges but as delineations of national psychology and national character and as avowed or subconscious records of our national ideals, aspirations, successes and perils. From that point of view, whether we go to the *Rāmāyana* of Vālmīki or Vyāsa's *Mahābhārata* or proceed to the various later Purānas, or later still, to those significant and encyclopaedic repositories of folk tradition and folk ideals enshrined in the poetry of Tulsidas' *Rāmāyana*, or Kambar's Tamil *Rāmāyana* or Villiputurar's or similar renderings produced by the great Maharāshtrian, Telugu and Malayalam writers, we shall find that these works have profoundly affected the character of the people of our country and influenced their conduct. Such has been the case in India right through the

ages excepting for an interregnum during which there seems to have been a sudden slowing down of all mental and psychological energies during a couple of centuries. When about a hundred years ago, the new and renascent movement in India began to assert itself, it was again very largely the literary men, the writers, who influenced the course of events. I am referring to that uprush of national sentiment, of patriotism and the insistent desire for freedom from foreign domination portrayed in and also aroused by Bankim Chandra's novels and especially by the 'Vandemātaram' song, by what Madhusudan and Tagore and Bharati and Śrī Aurobindo emphasised and implied in their works, by the stories and dramas produced by other writers and by the spirited addresses of Swāmi Vivekananda which created a new outlook on the past as well as new standards of self-reliance and self-assertion.

The writer has undoubtedly made it possible for certain epochs, for some men and women and for certain types of beliefs and thoughts, to be known and remembered in the history of the world. There are also writers who have generated a civilisation, who have inspired great events and revolutions and have completely altered the complexion of affairs and the destiny of nations. Amongst them may be mentioned our own great writers of the past. Our Upanishads, Epics and Purānas have exemplified as well as created the ideals of tolerance, of Dharma, Rita and Ahimsa and the underlying consciousness of the continuity of existence imprinted on Indian consciousness.

Looking at the history of Indian literature during the last fifty to seventy years, Bengal has made a fine contribution beginning with Madhusudan and Toru Dutt and Sarojini Devi and, *par excellence*, Rabindranath Tagore who adorned everything that he touched. Now, we have arrived at a period of quiescence and tradition where, perhaps, the short

story alone is successfully cultivated. But in the drama, in romance, in the novel, in great inspirational poems, our recent output is not conspicuous from world standards. There has been fine work done in Tamil in the domain of patriotic and devotional poetry. There has been a freeing of Tamil from the procrustean chains of pedantry and of involved and pseudo-archaic style. A new and vigorous journalism has come into existence. Similarly, there is much fine work produced in Gujerati, in Marathi and in Hindi; but most of it, after Tagore, has failed to obtain an international or even national forum. On the whole, compared with the achievements of the distant past, the writers' accomplishment of today is not vitally significant. This state of things is rather astonishing because throughout history we find that, during great and dynamic epochs of a nation's life, new ideas and new aspirations come to the front as in the Periclean Age in Greece, when there was a great burgeoning of poetry, drama and philosophy; or the Elizabethan period in England and Louis XIV's reign in France. In India, during the last few years, a new nation has been in the making and has emerged into adult status. It is somewhat surprising that our national consciousness and national genesis should not have asserted and manifested themselves and that our self-expression has not found an adequate literary form. To achieve such a result, it is important for the writer not to be overwhelmed by the occasional, the incidental and the temporary. There are some aspects of our national character which we should recognise as both guides and warnings. Our assets are these. From the Vedas down to the classical ages, there has been no emphasis on money power or the virtues of plutocracy in Indian literature. Wealthy men, as such, never counted for much in the story of Indian life. Also, while we have no right to deny spirituality to other peoples or to claim a monopoly of that quality, yet it is true that the materialistic aspects of life have

never figured as fundamental in our national make-up. Most conspicuously may be remarked the essential tolerance embodied in our traditions, the supreme faculty of living and letting live, and the chivalrous recognition of merit, even in opponents, as in the case of the stories relating to Bali Chakravarti and Rāvana. These components of our culture are still vital for us.

On the other hand, we find certain features which are recurring today that have been the hurdles of our past history. These are the fissiparous and centrifugal influences which have asserted themselves periodically in spite of the intrinsic and over-all unity of Indian culture, the tendency to idolise persons temporarily and then to forget them and the disposition to pay heed to and even be guided by crude superstitions or by rumours and gossip. Such predispositions may be noticed from the days of Vālmīki and are danger signals.

Today, the writers of India have to guard against these and other new developments. One is the insufficient importance paid to personality and the vindication of personality. We find that, throughout the history of the world, the artist, the poet, the dramatist and the historian have been persons who, in the main, stood for the sanctity and importance of the human personality and its right to exist and to assert itself definitely, and even aggressively. That assertion of personality and the refusal to worship shibboleths or the God of Uniformity, characterised the most outstanding of our creative artists but we have not always maintained that position; and one of the dangers today is that we may lose sight of the importance of personality and the resolute desire not to be submerged by propaganda or suppression or pursuit of the idols of the market-place. Much of our recent literature suffers from the reluctance of the author to face unpopularity. Men like Milton and Burke in the past, as well as Rousseau, Diderot

and Voltaire, the precursors of the French Revolution, Tom Paine, Jefferson and other protagonists of the American Revolution, and notably Ibsen and Bernard Shaw more recently, fought their way from unpopularity to recognition, and by their struggle helped to remodel and reform society. Today society tends to become monolithic and writers have to avoid becoming uniform in opinion and repetitive in the expression of thought. Some of the greatest minds have braved violent opposition. Dante, Rousseau, Shelley and Walt Whitman and Darwin occur to our minds. I am pleading that the writer must have the courage to be unpopular because it is important for him and the world, in the long run, that his original or seemingly singular ideas should not be suppressed, or played down. Primarily, the writer of today owes it to society and to himself to transcend all narrowness and to serve humanity rather than any smaller or narrower ideals. But for Washington, Jefferson and Hamilton and their great work during the period of the struggle with England, America would not have established its freedom. It was the writer again who brought unity to Italy and Mazzini and Gabriele d'Annunzio can never be forgotten. The unity of India was also ushered into existence by her writers starting from Dadhabhai Naoroji, Tilak, Gokhale, Ranade and Wachha and down to Dr. Besant, Śrī Aurobindo and Gandhiji. Today, there is a new call and an enlarged ideal which demand a fresh interpretation on the part of the writer. The claim of the universal as distinguished from the particular is one which the Indian writer should recognise and implement as his heritage from the past and as his incumbent duty at this juncture of world evolution. The eschewal of the things of the moment in favour of the things that are excellent and permanent, and the insistence on the right and privilege of thinking for himself, whatever other people may think or do are his inescapable obligations.

Today we are at the cross-roads. There have always been periods of transition and of incubation. This is one such. One feels confident that a period of renaissance will emerge. It is up to all of us not merely to give support and encouragement to the writers but to produce an atmosphere which will be tolerant in response to the best traditions of Indian life and Indian history and universal in the sense of an aspiration towards a world fellowship of life and letters.

—Lecture delivered in November 1956

XIII

ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN

In response to the kind invitation of the Vice-Chancellor, I am appearing before you in two capacities, namely, that of an apologist and that of a champion. My apology is due to the authorities and students of this celebrated all-India Institution of which I gladly accepted the Vice-Chancellorship interrupting the work of a sister residential University wherein I was instrumental in commencing some new and creative activities. I came here full of hope and, at the same time, fully conscious of the staggeringly onerous responsibilities that I assumed. I shall indicate, in the course of this Address, the lines of consolidation and of progress which I had placed before myself as my ideals and which, thanks to the unflinching co-operation of the Central Government and of my academic and administrative colleagues, attained a degree of success which surpassed my legitimate expectations. I soon discovered, however, that the comprehensive and exacting duties towards the Institution as a whole and personally towards the teachers and students of the University demanded such concentration and duration of effort that was not possible for me, consistently with such obligations as completing certain literary tasks for which I had been collecting materials during many decades and in respect of which I have definite commitments. I realised that, in order adequately to discharge the tasks that devolve on your Vice-Chancellor, he should perforce regard the office as a truly full-time job; and,

perceiving, in the words of the old poet, "time's winged chariot hurrying near," I concluded that it was due to the University that I should yield place to one who could give the indispensable and continuous attention which the affairs of the University need and deserve. My apology, therefore, is founded on the truth embodied in the Latin maxim, '*Ars longa vita brevis*,' Art is long and life is short. Genuine as my regret is on ceasing my active connection with this University, I may yet assert that my interest will be unabated in its future welfare and achievements. My regret, moreover, is tempered by the consciousness that a tried and popular administrator has succeeded me in my office.

I have been, and will continue to be, a champion of this University for the reason that it represents a unique tradition and is pervaded by a characteristic atmosphere. It is not for me, before this audience, to emphasise that the glory of this University lies not in its area of over a thousand acres nor in its architectural environment nor, again, in its situation by the side of the storied river whose course has witnessed the intellectual and spiritual struggles and achievements of immemorial generations. It is not even the recollection that Vyāsa and Buddha and Śankara and Dhanvantari consummated their missions in this hallowed spot. Its special glory is that, at a psychological moment in the chronicles of this country, Mahāmāna Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the contemporary of Gokhale, Aurobindo Ghosh, Surendranath Banerjee, Mahātma Gandhi and Bal Gangadar Tilak, stimulated like them by the burgeoning renaissance of the country, became the protagonist of a constructive and universal though vitally Hindu movement. Fortified by the magnanimous self-sacrifice of another great leader, Dr. Annie Besant and colleagues of hers like Dr. Bhagavan Das and supported by farsighted philanthropists like the Maharajas of Darbhanga, Bānaras, Bikanir and Mysore and the Rulers of many other States in North and South

India and Rajputana, he inaugurated, in 1921, an Institution designed to fulfil epochmaking expectations of being an all-India residential centre of multiform education and inspiration. The spirit and the culture of India had pervaded many parts of the globe in ancient days and it is not a small thing to have revived those traditions and those potentialities.

The Banaras Hindu University was the first specifically residential and teaching University in India and its avowed object was to resurrect the pristine Indian culture and to revive the racial traditions of keen investigation and all-embracing harmony that characterised the Gurukulas and famous centres of learning like Taxila, Nalanda, Kāśi and Kānchi. Side by side with such objectives, the founders of this University were vividly conscious of the inevitable impact of modern science and technology on the mind of the East and resolved to make scientific, technological and engineering training an essential part of the work of this University.

One of the chief purposes of this University is also the preservation, exposition and popularisation of the best thoughts of India. This is an enormous task and demands systematic and continuous work on the part of the College of Indology and of the Sanskrit Mahā Vidyālaya. That work cannot be achieved by occasional and sporadic publications and discourses. Further, this University was intended to be, and should be, a nucleus of activity in research and invention and in the publication of the results of such research so as to advance and diffuse humanistic, scientific, technical and professional knowledge. But, above all, one of the proclaimed ideals of the University was the building up of the character of our youth by making religion and ethics an integral part of education. Some of these aspects have received less than the requisite attention after the demise of the Founder and need careful and unremitting devotion on the part of this University. The desired results can only be attained, however, when the

Institution really fulfils its character of a teaching and residential University.

The vitality of a teaching University must inevitably be in proportion to the intimate communion it generates between the teacher and the taught. The increase of the teaching staff and the maintenance of the right proportion between the numbers of the teachers and the students (which, in many great foreign centres, is one to five or six) can alone bring about lively contact and repercussion of mind and soul and the possibility of discussions and demonstrations in preference to set lectures. Equally important is the provision of a sufficient number of hostels, playgrounds, swimming pools and other facilities for a healthful and stimulating corporate life as well as accommodation for teachers near the residences of the students which will enable them to discharge their fundamental task. The ancient and proven method of teachers rather than teaching, or in other words, of the personal influence of a master and the initiation of a disciple, cannot be conceived without these pre-requisites. If, in the language of Cardinal Newman, a University is to be a place where enquiry is pushed forward and discoveries verified and perfected, rashness rendered innocuous and errors exposed by the collision of mind with mind and knowledge with knowledge, such requirements cannot be satisfied unless ample opportunities exist and are fully availed of to enable young men and women, students from every part of the country and holding every shade of opinion, eager, curious and inquisitive, to meet each other and their instructors for investigation and disputation, tending towards eventual harmony and reconciliation. Indeed, such contacts between the students are more important even than lectures and demonstrations. The value of team-games and of institutions like Rovering and the N.C.C., of debating Societies and Unions, of library classes and excursions arises from a well-conceived conspectus of educational

progress. Much has been done in this University along these lines but, as I discovered when I took charge of my duties as Vice-Chancellor, very much more remains to be achieved.

The finances of this University which were very soon after its creation found to be incompatible with its ambitions, owed their genesis and accretion mainly to the labours and to the wide-spread influence of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. This University, almost until the advent of Independence, was regarded as a centre of disaffection and sedition; and even an objective and non-political Vice-Chancellor like Dr. Radhakrishnan was faced with the problems arising from the distrust of the authorities which had the effect *inter alia* of affecting the financial position of the Institution. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the Central Government have now assumed the responsibility for recouping the deficits in the budgets of Central Universities like ours. It is equally a matter for congratulation that the University Grants Commission has been established with a view not only to stimulate, canalise and finance learning and research but, by preventing over-lapping and the wise concentration of resources, to ensure harmonious development throughout India of University facilities suited to the potentialities and the resources of each centre of learning. It is also satisfactory that the Commission has decided to give interest-free loans to Universities for the construction of hostels under the Second Five-Year Plan and that a scheme for a similar grant by the Central Government to affiliated Colleges is under consideration.

The Radhakrishnan Report, in its useful remarks on the Banaras Hindu University, stressed two points which need to be constantly borne in mind, the first being the preservation of the all-India character of the University, and the second, the development of the Residential arrangements. In the words of that Report the pressure on available space in the hostels is very heavy, and even with great congestion the

University is able to accommodate much less than fifty per cent of its enrolment in the residential units. The original idea of a residential University has thus only been partially fulfilled and the University should expand and vastly improve its residential amenities. Fortunately, the liberality of donors and the encouragement of the Central Government have made some improvements possible in this respect but the deficiencies are obvious. When I assumed charge as Vice-Chancellor, my first pre-occupation was to improve the roads and the water-supply and drainage systems which had been long neglected owing to lack of funds, and to alleviate the extreme congestion and confusion prevailing in the hostels and to plan for new hostels. Even during the short time of my tenure as Vice-Chancellor, important developments were carried out owing to the generous assistance received from the Central Government and the co-operation of my colleagues and especially by reason of the unwearied labour and enthusiasm of your Pro Vice-Chancellor, Śrī Bijawat. We are far, far away, however, from the ideals of a truly residential University.

My thesis has always been that some Institutions or at least one Central Institution like the University of Banaras, should be built up as a model to the country at large, that such a University should be provided with teachers sufficient in number to reproduce, at least to a partial extent, the Gurukula system; that the students should live not in luxurious but in wholesome and well-ventilated buildings and surroundings and be supplied with nourishing food provided by restaurants and agencies in whose maintenance and supervision the students and teachers are co-operatively interested; that facilities for every kind of team sports and Yoga training should be provided as of equal importance with accommodation and that, moreover, University Unions, Debating Societies and Associations should serve their true purpose of embodying

and demonstrating the corporate and social possibilities of students whose diverse faculties and outlooks are thereby integrated into a composite harmony. Then alone will the University begin to possess an inner vitality based on the right type of atmosphere and tradition.

The recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission and other factors have resulted in the shedding of the University's denominational character and efforts have been made to preserve and maintain its all-India function. Nevertheless, in the nature of things, a very large proportion of its students is derived from the U. P. and Bihar and other contiguous States, especially in the non-technical departments. It may be remarked, in this connection, that on account of financial difficulties and other reasons, this University has not been obtaining that help from the Governments of States like the Uttar Pradesh and Bihar that one may expect. This is a matter to be carefully considered not only by the Governments concerned but by the public of the localities in question and by the University Grants Commission.

It is now my duty to refer to certain topical matters that are now arousing keen interest in educational circles. Education involves awakening and certainly neither a closed mind, nor smugness and complacency.

नविद्यतेविनाज्ञानं विचारेणान्यसाधनैः

" Discriminating wisdom is not attained save through dialectic investigation." If this proposition is accepted and fully and wisely implemented as well as Asoka's exhortation समधायएवस, " Reconciliation and harmony are the best methods," we shall be able better to face the question of the so-called indiscipline among students. I have already alluded to the circumstance that necessarily and inevitably this University, during several years, reflected the political temper and activities that preceded the Independence of India. Certain

methods were adopted and certain attitudes of mind were encouraged which have, unfortunately, but not unnaturally, persisted after the attainment of freedom. But any indiscipline among students, now as then, must only be regarded as a natural replica of indiscipline among their elders; and if there is any lack of charity, lack of self-control, the emitting of out-worn slogans or the continued recourse to inappropriate nostrums like hunger-strikes or stoppages of trams and railways, the evils cannot solely be attributed to Universities. At the same time, it is arguable that Universities should be the nurseries of poise and a sense of proportion and should furnish an example to the world at large. In my opinion, such an example can be set by the Universities and the much-desired atmosphere of outer peace and inner dynamism produced if, and only if, the following conditions are fulfilled:

(*a*) The teachers should, as envisaged in the University Commission's Report, the Secondary Education Commission's Report and the ideals set before the University Grants Commission, be adequately remunerated and their prospects and future suitably provided for. By these means alone will the teachers become centres of unruffled enlightenment and also the inculcators of a disciplined and purposeful student life. The number of teachers has also to be increased as already emphasised in such a manner as to bring about personal contact between the teacher and the taught. Set lectures and elaborate and one-pointed notes should not so much be the object as personal discussion, library classes and seminars. The teachers should consider it their duty to deal not only with the educational but the personal problems of their students and should have the necessary moral background and authority for fulfilling this important function. A discontented set of teachers, faced with meagre prospects and with little social prestige, always agitating for improvements in their status and remuneration and constantly elbowing

each other or on the look-out for alternative careers cannot but be object lessons in frustration and discontent to the student population.

(*b*) The physical, mental, recreational and moral needs of the students should be anxiously attended to by the improvements already indicated in hostel accommodation, in the provision of smaller classes, in the eschewal of the ideal of formal lectures to large classes and the substitution therefor of a system by which the students instinctively look to their instructors not only for the solution of their intellectual difficulties but of the numerous problems that are inseparable from the impressionable periods of their adolescent existence.

There is a real distinction between indiscipline and restlessness. Restlessness, if by that term is meant the quest of psychological and physical adventure, is and should be the characteristic of youth. Indiscipline results mainly from frustration and lack of proper direction. The cure for indiscipline, therefore, is the removal of the element of frustration in our scheme of studies and in the relation between the teacher and the taught. Above all, frustration originates from the ever-present anxiety of the student with reference to his future. I shall firstly deal with the position of the student during his University course. England furnishes a remarkable example in respect of the financing of the national system of education. Full-time schooling has been made free for all children in popularly maintained Primary and Secondary schools. In April 1945, fees in all types of Secondary schools, including voluntary schools, were abolished and the school-leaving age was raised to 15 in April 1947 and is proposed shortly to be raised to 16. In respect of higher education, whereas in India only 35 crores of rupees have been provided for the University Grants Commission out of the total 4,800 crores envisaged for the Second Five-Year Plan, the total number of awards of scholarship current in 1955 in the English

Universities was about 7,000 and scholarship awards by Local Education Authorities amounted to a total of 35,000. Without a doubt, it may be averred that in the United Kingdom about 80 per cent of the students studying in the Universities receive adequate financial help from the State, from Local Authorities and from organised philanthropic agencies. Not very dissimilar is the case in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. It is claimed that higher education is almost fully subsidised in the Soviet Republic and, to my knowledge, the Chinese system of higher education imposes very little financial burden on the student who is, however, carefully selected with advertence to his suitability for University education. There is, in these countries, an outstanding sense of obligation to give facilities enabling every one to rise to the highest altitude in education that is possible for attainment by a person, according to his or her capacity and potentiality. As late as 22nd November 1956 an announcement was made in England of a special grant of 36 million pounds awarded for the erection and extension of University building. An almost equal amount has been given for the extension of technical colleges and the Royal Institute of Technology. It is worthy of note that these awards have been made at a time of grave financial and political uncertainty in the United Kingdom.

I have been pleading both in the University Grants Commission and on the Inter-University Board (along with leaders like Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar) for a complete revision of our ideas regarding studentships at the Universities. The poverty of the average Indian student is notorious and, as I know personally, he has to resort to desperate expedients to meet the expenses of his maintenance and education. It is incumbent on the State to see that no person who is fitted, not solely by his inclinations but by his aptitude, to benefit by a course of higher study is precluded from pursuing it. The

scholarships that are granted should not be of a token nature such as Rs. 5 or Rs. 10 per month (as is too often the case) but enough adequately to provide for the student's college, library and sports fees and the expenses incurred in hostels and societies. It is a matter for satisfaction that the award of some scholarships of Rs. 100 per month has been announced by the Central Government, but this should only be the first step in a well-designed and country-wide programme. The leaders of the future and the architects of the Five-Year Plans can only be generated by the Universities.

These considerations bring me to the connected question of admission to Universities. It is a truism that University authorities now find it difficult to refuse admission to candidates for the reason that there is no avenue for a profitable or useful employment save through the University corridors. A Government Committee has recently submitted its report on the subject of the relation of University Degrees to public and other services and the State will no doubt, if the Report is implemented, create sufficient opportunities for employment without the compulsory recourse to a University. A University should be the resort only of those who are fitted by aptitude and ardent desire for higher studies and research and are not merely entering its portals because they can do nothing else to fit themselves for a gainful and useful existence. Without a limitation on admissions to *bona fide* and intrinsically fit aspirants for humanistic, scientific, technological or professional study and research, most of the reforms previously adumbrated cannot be brought into operation and this is a topic which calls for calm and dispassionate thinking. The automatic and unpurposeful increase in admissions to Universities is destructive of efficiency and discipline as well as of real study and the problem brooks no delay in its solution.

The continuing increase in our population, the upsurge of many communities and classes that are newly and rightly

clamouring for higher education and the progressive increase in the standards of living cannot be ignored. The remedy is the creation of more centres of diversified study in different parts of the country, urban and rural, and not the over-crowding of already congested Universities. In order to fulfil the demands of a Welfare State and to give equality of opportunity to all citizens, the State should make effective provision for ensuring different types of appropriate education, elementary and higher. The ancient Universities of the West made a differentiation between their Pass Courses and higher studies. Anyone could get a modicum of liberal education and obtain the benefits of corporate University life as a part of humanistic training. Though such a provision existed, the University regarded it as their main function and obligation to subserve the needs of concentrated higher studies. It may be considered whether we should not, in India, have Institutions other than Universities which may, subject to the limitations of finance and personnel, give such broad general education to the citizens, so as to be a grounding for the numerous avocations and professions for which they may qualify themselves later. Such an idea underlies the scheme of general education which has been advocated by the Secondary Education Commission. It is admitted that the study of literary classics opens the gates to new worlds of thought and leads to the appreciation of essential ideas on philosophy, religion and the problem of society. It is recognised, as has been stated by Sir John Lenard Jones, the Principal of the University College of North Staffordshire, that this study imparts not only cultural quality but is of incalculable moral value. The study of science preserves and takes advantage of the gift of curiosity and the instinct for investigation. University studies today are very often designed by specialist for specialists; and in order to offset the tendencies towards excessive specialisation, the University of Staffordshire was

founded by the efforts of Lord Lindsay and it provides, for the first time, a more general type of training. It does not, at the outset, cater for the specialist. Its course is intended to furnish students with some appreciation of the inter-connection of the main branches of knowledge rather than an intense comprehension of any one. It is not intended to prevent students from becoming specialists later on, the idea being that the students will be all the better if, with the back-ground of the main branches of study, they turn their attention to a particular field in their later and post-graduate work. When the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission are implemented by means of the pre-University courses and the multi-purpose schools contemplated in their scheme, not only will more possibilities of immediate and gainful employment be available to the students so trained, but the role of the Universities will be more effectively established as agencies for the imparting of intense methods of training to those who are truly fit for it and who do not regard Universities as a *pis aller*.

The Engineering and Technological Faculties of this University are deservedly famous all over the country and have attracted an ever increasing number of diligent and efficient students. By their constitution and their possession of many of the *desiderata* outlined above, they turn out, in the main, a purposive and disciplined group. I have no doubt that the Departments of Engineering proper and Chemical Engineering will be greatly extended so that the contemplated developments in such fresh directions as the handling and knowledge of jet air-craft and jet engines may also come within their purview and facilities like an aero-drome and a centre of aeronautical research may be provided. The announced programmes of the Central and State Governments comprise a large expansion in the number of such Engineering, Technological and Industrial Research

Institutions and in respect of the facilities and amenities thereof.

I also regard it as essential that a vigorous School of Architecture should come into existence in Banaras so as to furnish the needful inspiration to an art and technique which today are too often derivative rather than original or based on our specific needs and traditions. I, for one, have lamented that in the creation of new capitals in India, our own traditions have sometimes been subordinated to the theories of foreign experts with different backgrounds.

This University has the proud privilege of possessing a large store of original paintings, sculpture and other works of art. North India has evolved a School of Painting as *sui generis* as South Indian Sculpture and Architecture; and a properly organised Degree Course in the Fine Arts should be one of the departments which we should work for. But at least equally urgent with such a development is the fulfilment of the ambition which underlay my appointment of a Committee for the extension of the scope and objectives of the College of Music. The all-India character of this University should perforce lead to such an extension as will embrace all Indian schools of music and will be an example and stimulus to musical theoreticians and exponents of instrumental and vocal music illustrative of the varied genius and techniques developed in all parts of the country.

There is an ancient tradition of planetary and stellar observation in Banaras which may well be revived. There is urgent need today for astronomical and meteorological work even apart from official Observatories; and Banaras would seem to be an appropriate centre.

The Radhakrishnan Commission has definitely stressed the importance of establishing a Medical College. We have already made provision here for an Ayurvedic Medical College and a Hospital both of which, however, require much improvement

and expansion. I look forward specially, in the near future, to the provision of sufficient facilities for research in the Ayurvedic system of treatment and pharmacopoeia utilising fully the methods and materials derived from modern science as well as from ancient lore. Our ancients did not disdain to learn from the Yavanas and we should have no hesitation in welcoming new ideas and new methods from every possible source, our object being the widening of the scope and possibilities of the healing art and public health activities.

Another idea has been constantly recurring to my mind both during and after my residence in Banaras. Lord Buddha preached in Sāranāth and Śankara commenced his apostolic adventure in Banaras mainly because, at that time, Vārānasi was the clearing house of ideas and the place of origin for new inspiration and intellectual endeavour. Completely to fulfil the ideas of its Founder and to maintain its character as a radiating nucleus of Hindu culture and thought to be envisaged in harmony with the most recent developments of science and speculation, it seems very appropriate that this University, in supplementation of the normal work of the Philosophy and Psychology Departments, should devote special attention to the fast evolving science of experimental psychology and para-psychology. These activities have awakened world-wide interest by reason largely of the instruction and the laboratory experiments originated by the Duke University from 1930 and carried out with elaborate scientific precautions and devoted enthusiasm by men like Prof. J. B. Rhine, S. G. Soal and F. Bateman. No doubt in some scientific quarters there is a controversy as to whether para-psychology is a real science. Extra-sensory perception and manifestations like psychokinesis, telepathy and clairvoyance can no longer be dismissed as superstitions after reviewing the work of men like J. B. Rhine, F. Bateman, C. E. Stuart, D. J. West and J. A. Greenwood. We are

beginning to realise that there are directions in research which, being neither strictly physical nor in any sense super-natural, are within the proper domain of the science of mind. There is no reason why we should assume that there is no kind of energy beyond what is already known. This fascinating department of research is one which appears to me to be cognate to the original ideals that underlay Pandit Malaviya's pioneering efforts. I note that experimental psychology is not unknown to this University or city; but I would advocate a survey of the whole topic and the inauguration of the necessary laboratory and apparatus. It is noteworthy that a brilliant article by Professor Rhine has been included in the very recent publication entitled *The New Outline of Modern Knowledge*. This volume has been produced late in 1956 by a well-organised team of European and American specialists and is edited by Mr. Alan Pryce Jones of the *London Times Literary Supplement.*

Deliberately, I am not entering upon a discussion of the much debated question of rival linguistic claims for the reason that, in a University constituted and built up as ours has been, there should be no room for such controversies. This University is not only of an all-India character but, having regard to the manifest destiny of our country, it should be an effective cultural link with all parts of the world. There should be no linguistic exclusions and no narrowing linguistic preferences. Hindi is the language spoken by the largest number of persons in India and its importance, as defined in the Constitution, cannot be minimised. The role of the regional or mother-tongue is of peculiar significance and no important mother-tongue should be withheld recognition or encouragement in this University. English is increasingly becoming, if it is not already, a universal language and is the repository and treasure-house of the results of world-wide learning and research in literature, the arts, science

and technology. Any detraction from its importance and manifest utility would be incompatible with our aim of being a centre of free trade in universal knowledge and also a place of concourse, in the glowing words of Cardinal Newman, whither students eagerly come from every quarter for every kind of knowledge. The ancient designation of a University was a *studium generale* or a school of universal study, such a description implying the assemblage of strangers from all parts in one spot which is conceived as a seat of wisdom, a minister of the faith, and an *Alma Mater* of the rising generation.

My primary obligation and function today is, of course, to felicitate all those who, by their efforts and concentrated struggles amidst various handicaps and difficulties, have graduated from this University and on whom the seal of approval has been duly set by the award of Degrees and Diplomas and prizes.

The question naturally arises as to what is to become of those who are emerging from our portals into a wide and too often un-comprehending world. It is clear that those who have undergone engineering and technological training are fairly assured of a useful part in the building of the new India. Indeed, Governments all over the world and especially in India who are intent on the implementation of their several plans, are anxious for a large increase of qualified personnel and are multiplying the number of Engineering and Technological Institutions. I have found from personal experience, during my administrative career, of our Engineers that, with adequate training and experience, they yield to no others in the matter of initiative, ingenuity and constructive ability; and I am confident that the number of specialists from outside whose help is invoked in the various branches of commerce, engineering and technology will be progressively diminished.

In view of the inevitable developments in Elementary and Secondary education and the increasing demand of more trained teachers in the Universities, the position of the teachers is bound to be enhanced both in respect of emoluments and prospect especially when it is fully realised that many of the difficulties of today arise from the psychological as well as financial frustrations of the teacher class.

The lawyer is somewhat at a discount during recent discussions but, here again, I am sure that there will be a growing recognition of the importance of the invaluable training in the law as a necessary concomitant to the maintenance of society developing under a written Constitution. The family lawyer whose chief role is the composing of disputes rather than the conduct of litigation, the consultant who will be a safe guide to the lay citizen through the mazes of ever-growing and ramified legislation, the constitutional lawyer who will increasingly function in the legislatures and local bodies and will be concerned with the interpretation, exposition and revision of statutory provisions as well as the vindication of individual rights and enforcement of constitutional obligations, these will, if not here and now at least very soon, be trusted and honoured members of society. The elimination of the lawyer which is sometimes advocated by protagonists of primitive judicatures is likely to remain a dream.

The products of the Medical and Ayurvedic colleges, always assuming that they do not sacrifice quality for quantity, will, for many long years, not even be adequate to provide for the personal and public health needs of our vast population.

The real problem of over-production will arise mainly in the case of those who undergo Pass or even Honours Courses in some of the humanistic branches of study and I have, elsewhere, dealt with the subjects of general education and the true functions of a University and the allied Institutions of the future. But there is one fundamental fact whose import

should not be ignored. The so-called over-production of graduates is really an illusion; and, in comparison with the population of our country, the out-turn of the Universities is nothing to be alarmed or sorrowful about. The raising of the level of general culture is, and should be, regarded as a fundamental duty of a Welfare State which ours aspires to be. And as I have elsewhere stressed, such culture should be within the reach of every one in the country fitted for it. And there is an aspect which no one dealing with the problem of education, especially of higher education, can forget. Many of the products of this University, as of sister Institutions, will naturally enter the field of politics; and politics, in the nature of things, is a vital function of the democratic and parliamentary State. Politics and administration, at many levels, will be the occupation of many of our alumni and nothing should be done which will discourage the attainment of high educational standards on the part of entrants into these spheres of life. Business administration, managerial technique and political, commercial and economic knowledge should be provided by Institutions specially designed for the purpose parallel to and in co-ordination, at certain stages, with our Universities.

At the 1953 Congress of the Universities of the Commonwealth, I advanced a special plea for academic mobility and I wish to repeat my contention. In order effectually to serve the interests of an Institution which is not only all-India in character but international in scope, I definitely hold the view that what is styled academic mobility should be our aim. In other words, professors and students from each University should frequently visit and take part in the activities of other Universities and this process should not be confined to our country but extend to centres of learning and scientific research in other lands. Such a scheme must receive the active encouragement of the State and of a discerning public. The

student travelling from professor to professor and University to University to perfect his equipment was a well-known and recognised phenomenon, and English, French, German and Italian Universities definitely encouraged this system in the heyday of their evolution. Such a practice will tend to the maintenance of uniformly high standards, bring about a free and welcome exchange of thoughts and ideals and eradicate all traces of provincialism, racialism and aggressive nationalism.

Let us realise that nations and cultures are remembered and respected not truly because of the heroes of the hour. They are relatively great. They are such in whom, as Emerson says, at the moment of success a quality is ripe which is then in request. Other days will demand other qualities. Again, as Emerson declares, great men of this type exist in order that they may be greater men. It is an undeniable fact that great men of action are not, save in very few cases, long remembered or generously judged by posterity. Carlyle describes the hero as a divinity, as a prophet, as a poet, as a man of letters and lastly as a king. Among the representative men delineated by Emerson are Plato the philosopher, Swedenborg the mystic, Montaigne the sceptic, Shakespeare the poet, Goethe the writer and lastly Napoleon, not as a conqueror or Emperor but as a man of the world. He is described as owing his predominance to the vitality with which he expressed in the tone of his thought and belief the aims of the masses of active and cultivated men. Looking back on our past, do we not see that Śrī Harsha, Vikramāditya and Bhoja have lived in the minds of men in after years through and by the influence of the contemporary poets, dramatists and men of letters whom they patronised and by whom they were immortalised? Are not Vālmīkī and Vyāsa and Kālidāsa and Viśākadatta, in a sense, the creators as well as the chroniclers of their heroes?

The history of the world has been stated to be the biography of its great men. Who are the really great? England

is remembered rather by its Shakespeares and Miltons and Wordsworths than its Elizabeths and Cromwells and Georges, its Marlboroughs and Wellingtons. Montaigne and Voltaire, Dumas, Balzac and Victor Hugo will live after the Rulers of France, including Napoleon, are forgotten. Wiemar's name is known to us because of Goethe and, in India, the Vedas and the Upanishads, the Epics and Purānas, our lofty philosophies and our dramas and songs as well as the specimens of our architecture and sculpture are the most enduring monuments of its age-long and fruitful existence. History proves that the poet's assumption is not a spurious claim:

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
    And out of a fabulous story
    We fashion our empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
    Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
    Can trample an empire down.

A University can justify itself and will have fulfilled its functions worthily only to the extent to which it helps the country to produce germinative minds and souls who will be the creators of our future poetry, drama, history and philosophy, science and technology. A University has to be universal in the sense that it is a harbour of refuge and succour to all who come to it from every part of the country in search of intellectual nourishment. It should be both broad-based and pyramidal in conception and consummation aiming at the apex of concentrated achievement and rising to that apex by well-designed stages from a deep and well-spaced foundation of cosmopolitan enlightenment.

The object of education has been stated to be the creation not only of a body of knowledge but of a quality of mind. It is our hope and aspiration that this University does not stand merely for mass dissemination of superficial and easily forgotten educational fragments. There is also the ever

present danger today of high specialisation exclusively devoted to scientific bye-products. The world has observed with poignant regret that those who are one-pointedly bent upon scientific research and pursuits, are apt to exaggerate the importance of their favourite studies and disparage other disciplines. The mistake is not solely with reference to scientific discoveries, even those culminating in the terrible engines of war produced by atomic fusion or fission. The danger lies really in selfishness and the unsocial concentration on values that are unworthy. The ultimate purpose of a University should be the formation of character and a sympathetic and intuitional philosophy of life, devoted to the pursuit and possession of the things that count.

The gains of science, gifts of art;
    The sense of oneness with our kind;
The thirst to know and understand—
    A large and liberal discontent:
These are the goods in life's rich hand,
    The things that are more excellent.

It is true that India needs more engineers, agriculturists and technicians. The basic problem of the Universities is, nevertheless, to preserve our fundamental heritage of culture without losing sight of the momentums afforded by science. They are wrong who have accused our tradition of being inert or static. In two of Lord Śrī Krishna's sayings may be found the answer to this charge:

योगः कर्मसुकौशलं

"True Yoga is efficiency in action."

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते

"Not by fleeing from action is obtained the ultimate detachment from action."

To reconcile the values indicated above, the atmosphere of a University should be stimulating but not destructive so that a peaceful environment should co-exist with dynamic

thought and speculation, the apparent poise of a fast moving and humming top being an apt illustration.

Truly may it be asserted of a University regarded as a centre of high intellectual, artistic and scientific attainment,

> Humanity with all its fears
> With all the hopes of future years
> Is hanging breathless on thy Fate.

—Convocation Address, Banaras Hindu University, 1956

XIV

THE FUTURE OF INDIA

TWENTY-FIVE years have elapsed since I ascended the steps of this dais, to obtain my Degree in Arts and I then listened, as you do now, to words of congratulation, admonition and exhortation that are the appropriate features of this ceremony. The temptation is irresistible to make a rapid survey of what has been achieved by this University in the intervening period and what has been omitted to be done. It were a facile task, to recount, since the work of criticism is an easy one, the many obligations that have been lost sight of or neglected. It is not a spirit of cavilling which makes me say that the attention which elsewhere and at other times has been paid to the cultivation of the Arts, which constitute no small part of the grace and of the glory of life, has not been the marked feature of our University or of the life of our alumni. Not by formal instruction, but by the creation of an environment of culture, is engendered the love of artistic and literary, nay, even scientific pursuits, and by the success in these alone is a nation finally judged. We sadly need the warning uttered by Sir Michael Sadler that the body should be adequately trained and the hand should be exercised not least because of its effects on the intellect, that both eye and ear should also be trained to discriminating use, the ear by music and beautiful inflexions of voice, the eye by skill with pencil and brush, because one of the great things in life is to have a trained appreciation of beauty. As one of you, I shall not be

mistaken if I emphasise that it is possible to overdo the formal and the intellectual branches of study, that the aridity of mind ranging through tracts where memory and intellect reign supreme, is apt to produce a pre-occupation in the things that are less excellent, and that such a pre-occupation has not been cured by the system of education that has here prevailed. It is as a corollary that I advert to the want of systematic, discerning and liberal encouragement of the creative spirit that ought to be the aim and is the main stimulus of high mental effort. On the other hand, neither a practical and scientific outlook on institutions, history and legend, nor a steady pursuit of the exact sciences has been associated with University life in this Presidency. The result is attributable largely to the circumstances of the students, and it is the case that the benefactions that have enriched other seats of learning have been lacking. We have thus not been able to create a School of History or of Law or of Science as our sister University of Calcutta has done by the aid of philanthropists like Tagore and Palit and Ghose, of a dynamic organising genius like Ashutosh Mukerji and of men of intellect and vision like Bose and Ray and Raman, Rash Behari Ghose and Sircar. It is easy to detract from the achievements of that University. It is not difficult to assert that it has cheapened its Degrees; but it is impossible to over-estimate the stimulation of intellect and spirit which has, though indirectly, led to the inauguration of the Bengal School of Painting and has laid the foundations of a national School of Architecture based on a study of ancient models like Ajanta, which has of set purpose revived a scientific interest in ancient Indian history and has largely re-constructed the Moghal and Mahratta periods for us, which has even explored with success partially alien cultures like the Chinese and the Tibetan. I do not mean to say that money and organisation will alone, without a general intellectual upheaval, produce any memorable results. But I would be

10

untrue to myself and to you if I did not advert to our deficiencies and our handicaps. This is a formidable tale, but let us not forget the other side.

The University of Madras has, I venture to think, produced a feeling of solidarity and fellowship amongst its undergraduates and graduates. It has brought about, what I may call, the guild-spirit—a spirit which evokes in those emerging from its portals the very real though perhaps half-conscious feeling that they are a society of student-adventurers jointly putting out on the ocean of life. We have, though only to a limited extent, seen the rise of that true inner democracy which is one of the fruits of higher education. For the equality which results from intellectual cultivation is a real equality and in our endeavours to assert our dignity, our sense of independence and of congruity with other cultured races, this, indeed, is a great asset. No man, as Sir Henry Maine once said, ever genuinely despised, however much he may hate, his intellectual equal. We found during the great war and afterwards what this intellectual fellowship may mean. As in Europe, so in India, the only community which is undivided by barriers of race, of prejudice, of birth or of wealth is the community of men of learning, of letters and science. Belgian scholars and Polish and Russian scientists can bear witness to the fact that the citizens of the intellectual republic may retain their fellow-feeling while the deadliest war separates their fellow-countrymen. Somewhat, it is true, by way of reaction against the foreign element in our mental equipment, but more by comparison with the history and progress of other lands, there has also been developed a keen sense of the unity of Indian aspirations—a realisation that Bhārata Varsha may be and ought to be one, a feeling that no erasure of agelong inequalities is too great an endeavour for the achievement of an ideal which has been adumbrated in our Itihāsas and has also knit in religious fellowship the

inhabitants of Śrīnagar and Kanyākumari, of Kāmarūpa and of Sindh.

We have been also realising that the higher education of women is as important and significant for future progress as that of men. This feeling is really not foreign to a race that produced a Maitreyi and a Gārgi, not to speak of notable Queens, one whose women have given their names to important parts of the *Rig Veda* and the *Upanishads*, nay, even to law books and mathematical treatises. Thus, no struggles disfigure this University such as have marked occidental foundations, against the assertion of the equality of opportunity to which the other sex is entitled. We have also, though late in the day, begun to perceive the inestimable value of a teaching and residential University. In this matter, again, we have not made a violent departure from our past traditions, our ancient custom and practice. As early as the seventh century before Christ in Takshaśīla (the modern Taxila), princes and pupils of all classes from one end of this Continent to the other, sat at the feet of their preceptors to learn all that was to be imparted in those days in science and the arts. It was possible for an orphan from Magadha to repair to this University and become proficient in medicine; and, as His Highness the Gaekwar in an address to the Benaras University has pointed out, after completing his studies this young man became the Royal Physician of Bimbisara. You must also be aware that in the time of Asoka the Great, there was a University of the same type in his Capital. Much later still, the great Chinese traveller has described the system of instruction and course of study pursued at Nalanda. In the medieval period, there existed the University of *Navadwīpa* in Bengal and the celebrated schools at Madura, Benares, Ujjain and Kānchīpuram. Always, in this country, the homes of the great scholars were residential institutions where high thinking and plain living, strenuous poverty and

the acquisition of almost encyclopædic learning went hand in hand.

Let us proceed to examine some of the criticisms that have been levelled against this and other Indian institutions. Is the instruction imparted here worthless, shallow, superficial? Does it amount to no more than cramming? Now, it is easy to give anything a bad name and this criticism is, in my view, only a fragment of the truth. If by cramming is meant only the rapid dissemination of knowledge that is the sign of modern life, it is one thing; but if it is a simulacrum of knowledge that is imparted, we are undoubtedly perpetrating a fraud upon ourselves and the country. In words which cannot be forgotten, Cardinal Newman has criticised those who reiterate that the aim of education is merely that of stimulation and not of set instruction. The stimulating system, he says, may be easily overdone—a blaze among the stubble and then all is dark. On the other hand, in the same discourse he has revealed the vital deficiencies of certain aspects of University teaching which are particularly apposite to us. Eloquence, he says, or the interesting matter contained in lectures, though admirable in themselves and advantageous to the student at a later stage of his course, never can serve as a substitute for methodical and laborious teaching. A young man of sharp and active intellect who has had no other training has little to show for it besides some ideas put into his head somehow. He is up with a number of doctrines and a number of facts but they are all loose and straggling, for he has no principles set up in his mind round which to aggregate and locate them. He can say a word or two on half a dozen sciences but not a dozen words on any one. He sees objections more clearly than truth, and can ask a thousand questions which the wisest of men cannot answer. This, he concludes, is that barren mockery of knowledge which comes of attending on lecturers or of mere

acquaintance with magazines, reviews, newspapers and other literature of the day, which, however valuable, are not in themselves the instrument of intellectual education. This amounts, in fine, according to him, to a mere hazy view of many things which may but mislead, just as a short-sighted man sees only so far as to be led by his uncertain sight over a precipice.

In the memorable Chapter on Pedagogy in that most suggestive of books *Sartor Resartus*, Carlyle chastises the hide-bound pedants who without knowledge of man's nature or of boy's, "cram into them innumerable dead-vocables; no dead language for they themselves know no language, and they call it fostering the growth of mind." How can an inanimate mechanical grinder foster the growth of anything, much more the mind that grows by mysterious contact with spirit-thought kindling itself at the fire of living thought?

I have always felt that it is such a mechanical and soulless system that leads to mental exhaustion and a repugnance to subjects which once attracted the student and often, moreover, it leads in India to a permanent form of scepticism if not of cynicism. It is on this ground that wise men everywhere and at all times have adverted to the supreme value of personal instruction, what, in the language of our metaphysicians, was described as the *Guru Śishya Pāramparya* in contradistinction to the rapid assimilation of ill-assorted matter at lectures and demonstrations. It is, therefore, that we welcome the attempts that have been made in India to revive the spirit of the old learning, albeit, adapted to newer needs. What is wanted is the implanting of a passion and a thirst for study and not merely the acquisition of a modicum of knowledge. One is reminded in this connection of the famous letter written by Lord Morley to the authorities of the University of Cambridge, when presenting to it the Library of Lord Acton, in which he deliberately stated that the gifts of historical thinking and the

acquisition of a perspective were better than mere historical learning. The very sight, Lord Morley added, of a vast and ordered array in all departments, tongues and times of the history of civilised Governments, the growth of faiths and institutions, the fluctuating movements of human thought, the struggles of churches and creeds and the diverse ideals of state —even a sight of these will be to the scholar a stimulus to thought and research. It is this plea for the creation of an attitude of mind that I desire to reinforce. Now, assuredly, all this may well be stigmatised as mere commonplace. But we must never forget that while the danger of dwelling on commonplaces is that it tempts men to question and deny them, yet, as a great historian suggested, nothing becomes commonplace which does not contain a large proportion of truth. It is a matter for satisfaction that this ideal has been apprehended by those charged with the administration of this department in Madras and, despite all criticisms that have been levelled against the new University Act, it must be granted that it is a bold and honest attempt to set the University on the right path. But the passing of the Act is nothing unless it is recognised that it is but the first step in a long journey. We should remember that the vitality of a University is not proved by grants from Government, though these are essential and a first charge on the State, but by the enthusiasm and co-operation of the people at large, proved by benefactions and endowments which ought to be regarded as the natural repayments of society for the benefits conferred upon it and received from education. It was a successful physician that founded the Caius College. He was childless but saw that the founder of such an endowment obtains a new and long-lived family. It was not for nothing that our lawgiver in the Mitākshara, proceeding on this idea, included in the list of heirs the disciple and the Guru. It is the response of the public to the call of learning that has to be initiated and

encouraged. Thus alone can be created a community of men of learning that will vivify and regenerate national life. It is earnestly to be hoped that our philanthropists and our graduates will follow the example of Sir Rash Behari Ghose and Premchand Roychand and Tagore and Sir Syed Ahmed and the founders of the Benares University. The English Universities, it is needless to say, are monuments of private liberality and many American Universities are the fruits of the munificence of single individuals, the advantage in the latter case being that each is able to develop so as to evolve a special and individual type of culture. Such an appeal ought to be needless in a country and in a Presidency where men often so whole-heartedly sacrifice their worldly goods in the cause of Dharma, where men act with such profound realisation of what their ancestors have done and what their descendants will do. Witness our choultries and our temples and a thousand instances of anonymous and vitalising philanthropy.

In sounding this note, let me not be understood to minimise the State's duty in regard to the active aid and financing of higher education, though at the same time we are bound to concede that the claims on the exchequer of primary mass education are more pressing than those of the University in the conditions of this country and in the absence of a national system of voluntary elementary education as conducted by Buddhist monks in Burma. Elsewhere the duty of the State has been adequately apprehended. The great Act of 1918 which England owes to Mr. Fisher is an instance in point, and the policy of retrenchment which followed after the passing of that Act has been rightly and severely attacked by competent critics. The great feature of that Act is a recognition of the responsibility of the State not only for educating children, but also for keeping control over them, after cesser of full time education, in what are termed Continuation Schools; and, adverting to the curtailment

of expenditure in the domain of education, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer has made these remarks which are not without relevancy. "Deliberately to select expenditure upon education as the first effort at financial retrenchment is foolish on the ground of national economy. An uneducated working class cannot be a physically or industrially efficient people." Men are, though slowly, commencing to perceive that the social and industrial problem in every country in its final analysis is a question of education; and the solution depends, to illustrate only one aspect of it, upon the dispelling of the universal ignorance of the primary laws of health and well-being. For, Matthew Arnold's definition of education as the wisdom to do the right thing in the right way and at the right time holds universally good. When the workman, whether labouring with his hands or with his mind, is trained to understand the science and significance of his trade or calling and the reasons for the operations he performs, we shall be able to give him an intellectual interest in his work. And to those who depreciate education as leading people away from habits of manual work or industry, we may say that when educated men of tomorrow perform what is today regarded as the work of drudgery, the work will be raised to the dignity of the educated man. Therefore it is, that it will be an unmixed advantage both to the individual and the community in India to ensure that every youth gets the foundations of a good general education. The aim as visualised by Lord Haldane speaking at one of the newer English Universities should be to bring the possibilities of University education down to everybody. We are too apt to concentrate our attention on the achievements of a few giants in science or literature and to ignore the truth that the object of higher education is two-fold: extensive and intensive. And, from the former point of view, the object is not to make more giants but to elevate the race itself. It is on this ground that I am disinclined to share

the pessimism of those who bewail the progressive multiplication of graduates and the mere diffusion of an ordinary grade of education. In envisaging our future, it is imperative to bear in mind the wise words of Ruskin who exclaimed, "How much misery and crime would be effaced from the world by persistence, even for a few years, in a system of education directed to raise the fittest into positions of influence, to give to every scale of intellect its natural sphere and to every line of action its unquestionable principle." It was with a lively consciousness of these aspects of educational activity that His Excellency the Earl of Reading, in his speech at the Universities Conference in May last, laid down as one of the great functions of Indian Universities to erect the Empire of Reason. This was the idea that underlay his statement that the Empire of Reason should be co-terminous with the Empire of India. Why did he say so? Examining this matter a little more closely, do we not all feel that we are, all the world over, and not least rapidly in India, approaching a period when not solely the forms of Government but even the foundations of the social organisation are being scrutinised by the popular mind? It is at such a juncture that our capacities are necessarily subjected to the most exacting of tests.

Lord Morley once expressed the aspiration that amongst the Universities of Great Britain there would be developed, as an essential equipment for national life, the habit of the mind trying to know the difference between a good argument and a bad one, between what was evidence and what was not, between a simple question and a compound one, to distinguish between the probable, the possible and the certain. This latter-day sermon has a peculiar applicability to us. No one would underrate the importance of forms of Government and of political constitutions, but it is not only those, as I have submitted, that are subjected today to scrutiny and examination and re-examination, but everything that appertains to

our society, its past and its future. In combating the problems that face us, we must learn, in the language of the same statesman, how to combine sane and equitable historic verdicts on events with a just evaluation of the actors. The growth of this frame of mind is not the least important of the services which higher education and the Universities can render. It cannot be gainsaid that the structure of society is undergoing half-hidden but very important alterations. All over the world, there is a change of attitude towards law and society. Institutions are no longer reverenced for their own sakes. While intent, and with good reason, on the topics of the times, on the work of Committees and Commissions and tariff boards, on strikes and aeroplanes, the railways and the price of securities, is it not possible to repeat the query of one of the keenest thinkers of the day that we are only half-awake to strong currents racing over our heads and under the ground at our feet and sweeping through the world of men? The only machinery that would enable us to achieve proper perspectives in such a state of things would be the equipment of every adult citizen in those aptitudes to which I have adverted and which are and ought to be the product of higher culture.

To use a different formula, liberal education on the higher plane is itself the best type of freedom—the enlightenment, as it has been justly said, of the conscience of the mind. The object and aim of such education should be to secure the formation and continuance of corporate life, to endow persons with the power and experience to work with their fellowmen for noble and public ends as leaders and as followers. It should be able, of its own force and vigour, to prepare those subject to it in the invaluable faculties of organisation and comradeship. Thus alone can it be made possible both in the intellectual and social spheres for those so trained to work with their compatriots to the best advantage. A healthy regimentation of effort and an appreciation of incorporate

activity were never as needed as now. Thus, for instance, will our graduate, if and when properly trained, realise the inevitability, if true progress is to be achieved, of social and other upheavals and the necessity for the reorganisation of society and the lopping of excrescences in the body politic. He will, at the same time, by virtue of that training, realise and vindicate his intellectual dignity and preserve his moral stature *vis-á-vis* the rest of the world. So to do requires the constant and sedulous realisation of the two maxims: "Know thyself," and "Be thyself". Thus it happens that stress has been uniformly laid by every rational thinker on the importance of the Indian outlook and the nationalisation of studies. Literature and indeed, even science, have to be racy of the soil to signify anything. Just as the prose poems of Tagore, Professor Raman's theories of sound and the crescograph of Bose are universal in appeal and yet, in a sense, appurtenant to India, so must every endeavour, intellectual, social and political, having its origin in the country essentially belong to it and not be a mere adaptation or an imitative effort. It is because this realisation is not quite vivid in this Presidency that our University means and stands for so little in the eyes of the outside world. A few men delving in past records for epigraphical results, some scholars and scientists who have perforce to seek refuge in the hospitality of neighbouring provinces or far-off lands, beyond the efforts of such persons what have we that will be characteristic of us or will last?

Let us, for a moment, review the achievements of South India in the past, its traditions and its pitfalls and handicaps. Beginning with Śankara and Rāmānuja and Madhva and coming down to more recent manifestations of the life and thought of Dravida, what do we find? Who are the most characteristic products of our recent history? In the field of science, Raman and Ramanujam and a long list of well-equipped and acute mathematicians

starting with Professor Ranganatham; in law, a Muthuswami Iyer and a Bashyam Iyengar; in the arts of statesmanship, a Madhava Rao, a Rangacharlu and a Seshadri Iyer. What do these typify? They, in their various fields and avenues of activity, stand for hard-headed practicality and acute reasoning. There is not the lyrical impulse, not the poetic gift; the efflorescence of their emotions is subordinate to the play of their intellect. If it were possible to take a conspectus of the activities of Southern India in the region of the Spirit and the mind contrasting it with the other parts of India, contrasting those whose names have been recounted with Buddha and the Jain Saints and Kabir and Tukaram and Chaitanya and Tagore and Sarojini and Vivekananda, what, barring the magnificently fervid output of the Tamil Saints, is the essential difference? Would it not be just to describe the achievement of the South as analysis, its danger being dialectic, a meticulous following of the logical and the practical for their own sake; in short, a matter-of-factness approaching to cynicism that tends in the mass to indiscipline and the play of centrifugal forces. Nevertheless, our plant must grow on the soil that has been made ready for it though it is possible to modify the reactions of the soil by careful manuring and nurture. The educational reformer who is anxious to bring about a harmonious development of the human faculties in the South, must take note of its characteristics, its strength as well as its weakness, must nourish the former and correct the latter.

Will you, while I am on this topic, permit me to utter a word not so much of warning as of introspection? My argument, if I have been correct in its steps, amounts to a plea for the creation of disciplined intellects and emotions, not only from the point of view of individual achievement and progress, but inasmuch as the tendency of the day is towards, what I may term, a pursuit of theory for theory's sake. We

must, in fine, guard ourselves against doctrines that take no account of facts, against catchwards and shibboleths. Speaking of a parallel phenomenon in Italy, the biographer of Mussolini and one of the historians of the Fascist Movement employs the following language which is obviously and wholly relevant. There are some occasions, says Doctor Pietro Gorgolini, on which sincerity of thought and action is tested and we learn whether men hold to a theory for the sake of that theory or for the sake of truth; whether they seek in the first place to prove themselves in the right and only in the second place to be in the right, or whether they seek above all to do right, whether their creed is directed to the general welfare or to their own mental satisfaction, whether they would rather change the destiny of thousands than change their own minds, whether they would rather risk a tragedy than admit a fallacy. It is because, as an Indian proud of my country but conscious of my own shortcomings, I realise the dangers of vague idealism and the vanishing of the sense of limits, that I have ventured to concentrate attention on the disciplinary nature of culture. In Scandinavian mythology, there is a reference to a tree (Ygdrassil) whose roots are imbedded in the earth and whose branches are in the empyrean. It is that figure that I would apply to the University and its functions.

It next falls to me to speak to the candidates individually; and in offering you my congratulations, and wishing you Godspeed, let me first refer to those who will shortly join my own profession. It is a trite remark that in India the Bar is overcrowded. But do those who make themselves responsible for that assertion advert to the multitudes who crowded the Bar even in the early days of the Roman Empire, and have they studied the figures in Europe and America? Do they realise that the first result of intellectual cultivation in every country has been the diversion of a large proportion of the youth of that country to the Bar? Do they not see that

the pursuit of Law is one of the few avocations which satisfy practical as well as speculative tests, as a profession combining the attractions of the study and the world of men? I cannot, therefore, concur with those who deplore the overcrowding at the Bar though I cannot but grieve over the fact that in the conditions of today, it happens to be almost the only pursuit that is available to the classes described in political parlance as the intelligentsia.

But even in this sphere of activity to which we are, by nature, predisposed and in which the average of achievement is so high, we have failed to sense the value of a scientific as apart from a professional study of the Law—a study which will embrace the analysis and the natural history of society and of institutions, which will produce savants like Maitland, Anson, Ilbert and Maine, Dicey, Thibaut, Savigny and Vinogradoff. None of our successful lawyers and legislators has yet emulated the example of that wise benefactor, Tagore. But it cannot be long before they see that it is not so much to the successful professional man that the growth of legislation and the evolution of Law which results from a scholarly analysis of institutions are attributable, but to the professor and the student in his closet who must be rendered independent of material worries in order to pursue their researches. It is not everyone who, like Sir Ashutosh Mukerji, can combine the burning enthusiasm and the catholic ardour of the student with the work-a-day requirements of the practical lawyer.

To you, Graduates in Medicine, I can but say that you have notable examples to follow, of devotion to science and the sacrifice of health and even life for its sake. But in this country, you also fulfil the part of missionaries and your work will be largely propagandist. The diffusion of medical and sanitary ideals is one of our foremost needs and preventive work is not less important than the actual practice of healing. On you will also devolve the duty of putting into scientific

and modern shape the older and partly empirical arts that have been practised, and not without success, by the exponents of the indigenous science.

It is a matter for congratulation that the faculties of commerce and agriculture are enlisting a growing interest though these branches of study do not yet rank as high in prestige as they ought to, especially in a tract where the population almost wholly lives on the land. This learning in its higher aspects is closely allied to politics and social life. Science and practice go hand in hand in their cultivation, and it is daily more manifest that our University must follow the younger foundations of the British Empire and America in laying adequate stress upon these topics. We may well take an example from some American Colleges and Universities where they confer Diplomas and Degrees in such ostensibly utilitarian subjects as domestic hygiene. As I have already stated, it is not the subject but the manner in which it is approached that matters in the acquisition of culture.

Graduates in Engineering, to you I have a word of special appeal. Great developments await our Presidency. I am a firm believer in the possibility, nay, the inevitability, of the utilisation of the vast sources of power open to us, the harnessing of the energy which at least as much as in Canada, lavish nature has placed at our command. I believe that by the growth of our irrigational facilities and the development of energy by means of hydro-electric appliances, we shall be able to revolutionise cottage industries and profoundly to modify factory practice, so as to produce things of utility and of beauty with the expenditure of the minimum of human energy, and so as to obliterate the sordid aspects of industrial life. This ought to be your special field of work and to you also will it be given to Indianise our architectural practice, to house our men and our great institutions in appropriate structures without disfiguring the face of the country by garish and purposeless

foreign ornamentation or offending the eye by unrelieved and uniform ugliness as of barrack rooms.

It is superfluous for me to refer in addressing the Graduates in Teaching to the profound revolution that has been effected in the fundamental ideals of your profession—a revolution which is based on the growing belief tested by experiment and practice, that your function is, in essence, to remove obstacles in the path of the acquisition of knowledge, to allow the intellect and the soul spontaneously to unfold and evolve instead of to cram the mind with indigestible matter. The doctrine associated with the name of Montessori is one of infinitely wide application and to you is given the function of being one of the most powerful factors in the evolution of the race.

I have done. In what I have been saying (I have rather been thinking aloud), I may have been a visionary and may perhaps be arraigned as impractical. But does not the failure to climb Mt. Everest, the great Gauriśankar, appeal to us as a more worthy attainment than the easier feat of surmounting lesser heights. The poet's exclamation is profoundly true that each age is a dream that is dying or one that is coming to birth. It is also mysteriously true that the fashioning of this dream and its realisation are in our hands. But in this translation of our dreams into practice, we can summon to our aid our sages and scholars and say with the poet:

Call me rather, silent voices,
Forward to the starry tract
Glimmering up the height beyond me
On, and always on.

Let me, in taking leave of you, ask you to remember the ancient exhortation—

"उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत".

" Uttiṣṭhata Jāgrata Prāpya varān nibodhata."

—Convocation Address, Madras University, 1924

